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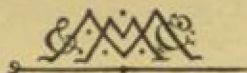
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PART IV

ADONIS ATTIS OSIRIS



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# ADONIS ATTIS OSIRIS

STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF  
ORIENTAL RELIGION

BY

J. G. FRAZER, D.C.L., LL.D., Litt.D.

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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## PREFACE

THESE studies are an expansion of the corresponding sections in my book *The Golden Bough*, and they will form part of the third edition of that work, on the preparation of which I have been engaged for some time. By far the greater portion of them is new, and they make by themselves a fairly complete and, I hope, intelligible whole. I shall be glad if criticisms passed on the essays in their present shape should enable me to correct and improve them when I come to incorporate them in my larger work.

In studying afresh these three Oriental worships, akin to each other in character, I have paid more attention than formerly to the natural features of the countries in which they arose, because I am more than ever persuaded that religion, like all other institutions, has been profoundly influenced by physical environment, and cannot be understood without some appreciation of those aspects of external nature which stamp themselves indelibly on the thoughts, the habits, the whole life of a people. It is a matter of great regret to me that I have never visited the East, and so cannot describe from personal knowledge the native lands of Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. But I have sought to remedy the defect by comparing the descriptions of eye-witnesses, and painting from them what may be called composite pictures of some of the scenes on which I have been led to touch in the course of this volume.

I shall not have wholly failed if I have caught from my authorities and conveyed to my readers some notion, however dim, of the scenery, the atmosphere, the gorgeous colouring of the East.

J. G. FRAZER.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
22nd July 1906.





## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN this second edition some minor corrections have been made and some fresh matter added. Where my views appear to have been misunderstood, I have endeavoured to state them more clearly; where they have been disputed, I have carefully reconsidered the evidence and given my reasons for adhering to my former opinions. Most of the additions thus made to the volume are comprised in a new chapter ("Sacred Men and Women"), a new section ("Influence of Mother-kin on Religion"), and three new appendices ("Moloch the King," "The Widowed Flamen," and "Some Customs of the Pelew Islanders"). Among the friends and correspondents who have kindly helped me with information and criticisms of various sorts I wish to thank particularly Mr. W. Crooke, Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie, Mr. G. F. Hill of the British Museum, the Reverend J. Roscoe of the Church Missionary Society, and Mr. W. Wyse. Above all I owe much to my teacher the Reverend Professor R. H. Kennett, who, besides initiating me into the charms of the Hebrew language and giving me a clearer insight into the course of Hebrew history, has contributed several valuable suggestions to the book and enhanced the kindness by reading and criticising some of the proofs.

J. G. FRAZER.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
22nd September 1907.





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47

BOOK FIRST

ADONIS





## CHAPTER I

### THE MYTH OF ADONIS

THE spectacle of the great changes which annually pass over the face of the earth has powerfully impressed the minds of men in all ages, and stirred them to meditate on the causes of transformations so vast and wonderful. Their curiosity has not been purely disinterested ; for even the savage cannot fail to perceive how intimately his own life is bound up with the life of nature, and how the same processes which freeze the stream and strip the earth of vegetation menace him with extinction. At a certain stage of development men seem to have imagined that the means of averting the threatened calamity were in their own hands, and that they could hasten or retard the flight of the seasons by magic art. Accordingly they performed ceremonies and recited spells to make the rain to fall, the sun to shine, animals to multiply, and the fruits of the earth to grow. In course of time the slow advance of knowledge, which has dispelled so many cherished illusions, convinced at least the more thoughtful portion of mankind that the alternations of summer and winter, of spring and autumn, were not merely the result of their own magical rites, but that some deeper cause, some mightier power, was at work behind the shifting scenes of nature. They now pictured to themselves the growth and decay of vegetation, the birth and death of living creatures, as effects of the waxing or waning strength of divine beings, of gods and goddesses, who were born and died, who married and begot children, on the pattern of human life.

The changes of the seasons explained by the life and death of gods.

Magical  
ceremonies  
to revive  
the failing  
energies of  
the gods.

Thus the old magical theory of the seasons was displaced, or rather supplemented, by a religious theory. For although men now attributed the annual cycle of change primarily to corresponding changes in their deities, they still thought that by performing certain magical rites they could aid the god, who was the principle of life, in his struggle with the opposing principle of death. They imagined that they could recruit his failing energies and even raise him from the dead. The ceremonies which they observed for this purpose were in substance a dramatic representation of the natural processes which they wished to facilitate; for it is a familiar tenet of magic that you can produce any desired effect by merely imitating it. And as they now explained the fluctuations of growth and decay, of reproduction and dissolution, by the marriage, the death, and the rebirth or revival of the gods, their religious or rather magical dramas turned in great measure on these themes. They set forth the fruitful union of the powers of fertility, the sad death of one at least of the divine partners, and his joyful resurrection. Thus a religious theory was blended with a magical practice. The combination is familiar in history. Indeed, few religions have ever succeeded in wholly extricating themselves from the old trammels of magic. The inconsistency of acting on two opposite principles, however it may vex the soul of the philosopher, rarely troubles the common man; indeed he is seldom even aware of it. His affair is to act, not to analyse the motives of his action. If mankind had always been logical and wise, history would not be a long chronicle of folly and crime.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As in the present volume I am concerned with the beliefs and practices of Orientals I may quote the following passage from one who has lived long in the East and knows it well: "The Oriental mind is free from the trammels of logic. It is a literal fact that the Oriental mind can accept and believe two opposite things at the same time. We find fully qualified and even learned Indian doctors practising Greek medicine, as well as English medicine, and enforcing sanitary restrictions to which

their own houses and families are entirely strangers. We find astronomers who can predict eclipses, and yet who believe that eclipses are caused by a dragon swallowing the sun. We find holy men who are credited with miraculous powers and with close communion with the Deity, who live in drunkenness and immorality, and who are capable of elaborate frauds on others. To the Oriental mind, a thing must be incredible to command a ready belief" ("Riots and Unrest in the Punjab, from a corre-



Of the changes which the seasons bring with them, the most striking within the temperate zone are those which affect vegetation. The influence of the seasons on animals, though great, is not nearly so manifest. Hence it is natural that in the magical dramas designed to dispel winter and bring back spring the emphasis should be laid on vegetation, and that trees and plants should figure in them more prominently than beasts and birds. Yet the two sides of life, the vegetable and the animal, were not dissociated in the minds of those who observed the ceremonies. Indeed they commonly believed that the tie between the animal and the vegetable world was even closer than it really is; hence they often combined the dramatic representation of reviving plants with a real or a dramatic union of the sexes for the purpose of furthering at the same time and by the same act the multiplication of fruits, of animals, and of men. To them the principle of life and fertility, whether animal or vegetable, was one and indivisible. To live and to cause to live, to eat food and to beget children, these were the primary wants of men in the past, and they will be the primary wants of men in the future so long as the world lasts. Other things may be added to enrich and beautify human life, but unless these wants are first satisfied, humanity itself must cease to exist. These two things, therefore, food and children, were what men chiefly sought to procure by the performance of magical rites for the regulation of the seasons.

The principles of animal and of vegetable life confused in these ceremonies.

Nowhere, apparently, have these rites been more widely and solemnly celebrated than in the lands which border the Eastern Mediterranean. Under the names of Osiris, Tam-muz, Adonis, and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead. In name and detail the rites varied from place to place: in substance they were the same. The supposed death and resurrection of this oriental deity, a god of many names but of

Prevalence of these rites in Western Asia and Egypt.

spondent," *The Times Weekly Edition*, May 24, 1907, p. 326). Unless we allow for this innate capacity of the human mind to entertain contradictory

beliefs at the same time, we shall in vain attempt to understand the history of thought in general and of religion in particular.



essentially one nature, is the subject of the present inquiry. We begin with Tammuz or Adonis.<sup>1</sup>

Tammuz  
or Adonis  
in Baby-  
lonia.

The worship of Adonis was practised by the Semitic peoples of Babylonia and Syria, and the Greeks borrowed it from them as early as the seventh century before Christ.<sup>2</sup> The true name of the deity was Tammuz: the appellation of Adonis is merely the Semitic *Adon*, "lord," a title of honour by which his worshippers addressed him. In the Hebrew text of the Old Testament the same name Adonai, originally perhaps Adoni, "my lord," is often applied to Jehovah.<sup>3</sup> But the Greeks through a misunderstanding converted the title of honour into a proper name. If scholars are right in deriving the name of Tammuz from a Sumerian phrase meaning "true son," or, more fully, "true son of the deep water,"<sup>4</sup> we must conclude that the Semites of Babylonia took over the worship from their predecessors the Sumerians, an ancient people apparently of the Turanian stock, who had occupied the country, tilled the soil, tended cattle, built cities, dug canals, and attained to a considerable pitch of civilisation before the Semitic hordes appeared on the banks of the Euphrates.<sup>5</sup> Be that as it may, we first

<sup>1</sup> The equivalence of Tammuz and Adonis has been doubted or denied by some scholars, as by Renan (*Mission de Phénicie*, pp. 216, 235) and by Chwolson (*Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, ii. 510). But the identification of them by Jerome (*Epist.* lviii. 3, and *Comment. on Ezekiel*, viii. 14, Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xxii. 581, xxv. 82), Cyril of Alexandria (*Comment. on Hosea*, iv. 15, Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, lxi. 136), and Melito (in W. Cureton's *Spicilegium Syriacum*, p. 44), may be accepted as conclusive. See W. W. Graf Baudouin, *Studien zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, i. 299; *id.*, in *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirchengeschichte*,<sup>3</sup> i.v. "Tammuz"; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 273 *seq.*; Ch. Vellay, "Le dieu Thammuz," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xlix. (1904) pp. 154-162. An Assyrian origin of the cult of Adonis was long ago affirmed by Macrobius (*Sat.* i. 21. 1).

On Adonis and his worship in general see also F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 191 *seq.*; W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, ii. 536 *seq.*; Ch. Vellay, *Le culte et les fêtes d'Adonis-Thammuz dans l'Orient antique* (Paris, 1904).

<sup>2</sup> The mourning for Adonis is mentioned by Sappho, who flourished about 600 B.C. See Tb. Bergk's *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*,<sup>3</sup> iii. 897; Pausanias, ix. 29. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopædia Biblica*, ed. T. K. Cheyne and J. S. Black, lii. 3327.

<sup>4</sup> *Dumuzi*, more fully *Dumuzi-ud-gal-ena*. See P. Jensen, *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen* (Berlin, 1900), p. 560; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Die Keilschriftenschriften und das Alte Testament*<sup>3</sup> (Berlin, 1902), p. 397.

<sup>5</sup> C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. (Gotha, 1896), pp. 134 *seq.*; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology* (London, 1899), pp. 1 *seq.*; H. Winckler, in E. Schrader's *op. cit.* pp. 10 *seq.*, 349; Fr. Hommel, *Grundriss*

meet with Tammuz in the religious literature of Babylon. He there appears as the youthful spouse or lover of Ishtar, the great mother goddess, the embodiment of the reproductive energies of nature. The references to their connection with each other in myth and ritual are both fragmentary and obscure, but we gather from them that every year Tammuz was believed to die, passing away from the cheerful earth to the gloomy subterranean world, and that every year his divine mistress journeyed in quest of him "to the land from which there is no returning, to the house of darkness, where dust lies on door and bolt." During her absence the passion of love ceased to operate: men and beasts alike forgot to reproduce their kinds: all life was threatened with extinction. So intimately bound up with the goddess were the sexual functions of the whole animal kingdom that without her presence they could not be discharged. A messenger of the great god Ea was accordingly despatched to rescue the goddess on whom so much depended. The stern queen of the infernal regions, Allatu or Eresh-Kigal by name, reluctantly allowed Ishtar to be sprinkled with the Water of Life and to depart, in company probably with her lover Tammuz, that the two might return together to the upper world, and that with their return all nature might revive. Laments for the departed Tammuz are contained in several Babylonian hymns, which liken him to plants that quickly fade. His death appears to have been annually mourned, to the shrill music of flutes, by men and women about midsummer in the month named after him, the month of Tammuz. The dirges were seemingly chanted over an effigy of the dead god, which was washed with pure water, anointed with oil, and clad in a red robe, while the fumes of incense rose into the air, as if to stir his dormant senses by their pungent fragrance and wake him from the sleep of death.<sup>1</sup>

Descent of  
Ishtar to  
the nether  
world to  
recover  
Tammuz.

*der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients*, pp. 18 sqq. However, Assyriologists are by no means agreed as to the occupation of Babylonia by an alien race before the arrival of the Semites. See M. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 21 sqq., 32 sqq.; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur*

*les Religions Sémitiques*<sup>2</sup> (Paris, 1905), pp. 55 sq.

<sup>1</sup> A. Jeremius, *Die babylonisch-assyrischen Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode* (Leipzig, 1887), pp. 4 sqq.; *id.*, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexicon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 808, iii. 258 sqq.; M. Jastrow, *The Religion*



Adonis  
in Greek  
mythology  
merely a  
reflection  
of the  
Oriental  
Tammuz.

The tragical story and the melancholy rites of Adonis are better known to us from the descriptions of Greek writers than from the fragments of Babylonian literature or the brief reference of the prophet Ezekiel, who saw the women of Jerusalem weeping for Tammuz at the north gate of the temple.<sup>1</sup> Mirrored in the glass of Greek mythology, the oriental deity appears as a comely youth beloved by Aphrodite. In his infancy the goddess hid him in a chest, which she gave in charge to Proserpine, queen of the nether world. But when Proserpine opened the chest and beheld the beauty of the babe, she refused to give him back to Aphrodite. The dispute between the two goddesses of love and death was settled by Zeus, who decreed that Adonis should abide with Proserpine in the under world for one part of the year, and with Aphrodite in the upper world for another part. At last the fair youth was killed in hunting by a wild boar, or by the jealous Ares, who turned himself into the likeness of a boar in order to compass the death of his rival. Bitterly did Aphrodite lament her loved and lost Adonis.<sup>2</sup> In this form of the myth, the contest between Aphrodite and Proserpine for the possession of Adonis clearly reflects the struggle between Ishtar and

of *Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 565-576, 584, 682 sq.; W. L. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, pp. 178-183; P. Jensen, *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen*, pp. 81 sqq., 95 sqq., 169; R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature* (New York, 1901), pp. 316 sq., 338, 408 sqq.; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 397 sqq., 561 sqq. According to Jerome (on Ezekiel viii. 14) the month of Tammuz was June; but according to modern scholars it corresponded rather to July, or to part of June and part of July. See F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, I. 210; F. Lenormant, "Il mito di Adone-Tammuz nei documenti cuneiformi," *Atti del IV. Congresso Internazionale degli Orientalisti* (Florence, 1880), I. 144 sq.; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 275; *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, i. v. "Months,"

iii. 3194. My friend W. Robertson Smith informed me that owing to the variations of the local Syrian calendars the month of Tammuz fell in different places at different times, from midsummer to autumn, or from June to September. According to Prof. M. Jastrow, the festival of Tammuz was celebrated just before the summer solstice (*op. cit.* pp. 547, 682). He observes that "the calendar of the Jewish Church still marks the 17th day of Tammuz as a fast, and Houtsma has shown that the association of the day with the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans, represents merely the attempt to give an ancient festival a worthier interpretation."

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel viii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Apollodorus, iii. 14. 4; Bion, *Idyl*, i.; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 831; Ovid, *Metam.* x. 503 sqq.

Allatu in the land of the dead, while the decision of Zeus that Adonis is to spend one part of the year under ground and another part above ground is merely a Greek version of the annual disappearance and reappearance of Tammuz.



## CHAPTER II

### ADONIS IN SYRIA

Worship  
of Adonis  
and Astarte  
at Byblus,  
the king-  
dom of  
Cinyras.

THE myth of Adonis was localised and his rites celebrated with much solemnity at two places in Western Asia. One of these was Byblus on the coast of Syria, the other was Paphos in Cyprus. Both were great seats of the worship of Aphrodite, or rather of her Semitic counterpart, Astarte;<sup>1</sup> and of both, if we accept the legends, Cinyras, the father of Adonis, was king.<sup>2</sup> Of the two cities Byblus was the more ancient; indeed it claimed to be the oldest city in Phœnicia, and to have been founded in the early ages of the world by the great god El, whom Greeks and Romans identified with Cronus and Saturn respectively.<sup>3</sup> However that may have been, in historical times it ranked as a holy place, the religious capital of the country, the Mecca or Jerusalem of the Phœnicians.<sup>4</sup> The city stood on a height beside the sea,<sup>5</sup> and contained a great sanctuary of Astarte,<sup>6</sup> where in the midst of a spacious open court, surrounded by

<sup>1</sup> The ancients were aware that the Syrian and Cypriot Aphrodite, the mistress of Adonis, was no other than Astarte. See Cicero, *De natura deorum*, iii. 23. 59; Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 44.

<sup>2</sup> As to Cinyras, see F. C. Movers, *Die Phœnizier*, i. 238 sqq., ii. 2. 226-231; W. H. Engel, *Kypros* (Berlin, 1841), i. 168-173, ii. 94-136; Stoll, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1189 sqq. Meliton calls the father of Adonis by the name of Cuthar, and represents him as king of the Phœnicians with his capital at Gebal (Byblus). See Meliton, "Oration to Antoninus

Caesar," in W. Cureton's *Spicilegium Syriacum* (London, 1855), p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Philo of Byblus, quoted by Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelii*, i. 10: *Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 568; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Βύβλος. Byblus is a Greek corruption of the Semitic Gebal (Gabal), the name which the place still retains. See E. Renan, *Mission de Phœnicie* (Paris, 1864), p. 155.

<sup>4</sup> R. Pietschmann, *Geschichte der Phœnizier* (Berlin, 1889), p. 139. On the coins it is designated "Holy Byblus."

<sup>5</sup> Strabo, xvi. 1. 18, p. 755.

<sup>6</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 6.

cloisters and approached from below by staircases, rose a tall cone or obelisk, the holy image of the goddess.<sup>1</sup> In this sanctuary the rites of Adonis were celebrated.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the whole city was sacred to him,<sup>3</sup> and the river Nahr Ibrahim, which falls into the sea a little to the south of Byblus, bore in antiquity the name of Adonis.<sup>4</sup> This was the kingdom of Cinyras.<sup>5</sup> From the earliest to the latest times the city appears to have been ruled by kings, assisted perhaps by a senate or council of elders.<sup>6</sup> The first of the kings of whom we have historical evidence was a certain Zekar-baal. He reigned about a century before Solomon; yet from that dim past his figure stands out strangely fresh and lifelike in the journal of an Egyptian merchant or official named Wen-Ammon, which has fortunately been preserved in a papyrus. This man spent some time with the king at Byblus, and received from him, in return for rich presents, a supply of timber felled in the forests of Lebanon.<sup>7</sup> Another king of Byblus, who bore the name of Sibitti-baal, paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III., king of Assyria, about the year 739 B.C.<sup>8</sup> Further, from an inscription of the fifth or fourth century before our era we learn that a king of Byblus, by name Yehaw-melech, son of Yehar-baal, and grandson of Adom-melech or Uri-melech, dedicated a pillared portico with a carved work of gold and a bronze altar to the goddess, whom he worshipped under the name of Baalath Gebal, that is, the female Baal of Byblus.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The sanctuary and image are figured on coins of Byblus. See T. L. Donaldson, *Architectura Numismatica* (London, 1859), pp. 105 sq.; E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, p. 177; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 60; R. Pietschmann, *Geschichte der Phoenizier*, p. 202; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 173. Renan excavated a massive square pedestal built of colossal stones, which he thought may have supported the sacred obelisk (*op. cit.* pp. 174-178).

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *De deo Syria*, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xvi. 1. 18, p. 755.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *De deo Syria*, 8; E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, pp. 282 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Eustathius, *Commentary on Dionysius Periegetes*, 912 (*Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 376); Meliton, in W. Cureton's *Spicilegium Syriacum*, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel xxvii. 9. As to the name Gebal see above, p. 10, note 3.

<sup>7</sup> L. B. Paton, *The Early History of Syria and Palestine* (London, 1902), pp. 169-171. See below, p. 67.

<sup>8</sup> L. B. Paton, *op. cit.* p. 235; R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. 57 (the Nimrud inscription of Tiglath-pileser III.).

<sup>9</sup> The inscription was discovered by Renan. See Ch. Vellay, *Le culte et les fêtes d'Adonis-Thammour dans l'Orient antique*, pp. 38 sq.; G. A.

Divinity of  
Semitic  
kings.

The names of these kings suggest that they claimed affinity with their god Baal or Moloch, for Moloch is only a corruption of *melech*, that is, "king." Such a claim at all events appears to have been put forward by many other Semitic kings.<sup>1</sup> The early monarchs of Babylon were worshipped as gods in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup> Mesha, king of Moab, perhaps called himself the son of his god Kemosh.<sup>3</sup> Among the Aramaean sovereigns of Damascus, mentioned in the Bible, we find more than one Ben-hadad, that is, "son of the god Hadad," the chief male deity of the Syrians;<sup>4</sup> and Josephus tells us that down to his own time, in the first century of our era, Ben-hadad I., whom he calls simply Adad, and his successor, Hazael, continued to be worshipped as gods by the people of Damascus, who held processions daily in their honour.<sup>5</sup> Some of the kings of Edom seem to have gone a step farther and identified themselves with the god in their lifetime; at all events they bore his name Hadad without any qualification.<sup>6</sup> King Bar-rekub,

Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions* (Oxford, 1903), No. 3, pp. 18 sq. In the time of Alexander the Great the king of Byblus was a certain Enylus (Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 20), whose name appears on a coin of the city (F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, ii. 1, p. 103, note 81).

<sup>1</sup> On the divinity of Semitic kings and the kingship of Semitic gods see W. R. Stalith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 44 sq., 66 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> H. Radau, *Early Babylonian History* (New York and London, 1900), pp. 307-317.

<sup>3</sup> The evidence for this is the Moabite stone, but the reading of the inscription is doubtful. See S. R. Driver, in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, i. v. "Mesha," vol. iii. 3041 sqq.; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 1, pp. 1 sq., 6.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Kings viii. 7, 9, xiii. 24 sq.; Jeremiah xlix. 27. As to the god Hadad see Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 23, 17-19 (where, as so often in late writers, the Syrians are called Assyrians); Philo of Byblus, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 569; F. Baethgen, *Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1888), pp.

66-68; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Nos. 61, 62, pp. 161 sq., 164, 173, 175; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 93, 493, 496 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Josephus, *Antiquit. Jud.* ix. 4, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Genesis xxxvi. 35 sq.; 1 Kings xi. 14-22; 1 Chronicles i. 50 sq. Of the eight kings of Edom mentioned in Genesis (xxxvi. 31-39) and in 1 Chronicles (i. 43-50) not one was the son of his predecessor. This seems to indicate that in Edom, as elsewhere, the blood royal was traced in the female line, and that the kings were men of other families, or even foreigners, who succeeded to the throne by marrying the hereditary princesses. See my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship* (London, 1905), pp. 231 sqq. The Israelites were forbidden to have a foreigner for a king (Deuteronomy xvii. 15 with S. R. Driver's note), which seems to imply that the custom was known among their neighbours. It is significant that some of the names of the kings of Edom seem to be those of divinities, as Prof. A. H. Sayce observed long ago (*Lectures on the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, p. 34).



who reigned over Samal in North-western Syria in the time of Tiglath-pileser (745-727 B.C.), appears from his name to have reckoned himself a son of Rekub-el, the god to whose favour he deemed himself indebted for the kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The kings of Tyre traced their descent from Baal,<sup>2</sup> and apparently professed to be gods in their own person.<sup>3</sup> Several of them bore names which are partly composed of the names of Baal and Astarte; one of them bore the name of Baal pure and simple.<sup>4</sup> The Baal whom they personated was no doubt Melcarth, "the king of the city," as his name signifies, the great god whom the Greeks identified with Hercules; for the equivalence of the Baal of Tyre both to Melcarth and to Hercules is placed beyond the reach of doubt by a bilingual inscription, in Phoenician and Greek, which was found in Malta.<sup>5</sup>

In like manner the kings of Byblus may have assumed the style of Adonis; for Adonis was simply the divine Adon or "lord" of the city, a title which hardly differs in sense from Baal ("master") and Melech ("king"). This conjecture would be confirmed if one of the kings of Byblus actually bore, as Renan believed, the name of Adom-melech, that is, Adonis Melech, the Lord King. But, unfortunately, the reading of the inscription in which the name occurs is doubtful.<sup>6</sup>

Divinity of the Phœnician kings of Byblus and the Canaanite kings of Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Cooke, *op. cit.* Nos. 62, 63, pp. 163, 165, 173 *sqq.*, 181 *sqq.*; M. J. Lagrange, *op. cit.* pp. 496 *sqq.* The god Rekub-el is mentioned along with the gods Hadad, El, Reshef, and Shamash in an inscription of King Bar-rekub's mortal father, King Panammu (G. A. Cooke, *op. cit.* No. 61, p. 161).

<sup>2</sup> Virgil, *Aen.* i. 729 *sq.*, with Servius's note; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, i. 86 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel xxviii. 2, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Menander of Ephesus, quoted by Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, i. 18 and 21; *Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum*, ed. C. Müller, iv. 446 *sq.* According to the text of Josephus, as edited by B. Niese, the names of the kings in question were Abibal, Balbazer, Abdastart, Methusastart, son of Leastart, Ithobal, Balzor, Baal, Balator, Merbal. The passage of Menander is quoted also

by Eusebius, *Chronic.* i. pp. 118, 120, ed. A. Schoene.

<sup>5</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 36, p. 102. As to Melcarth, the Tyrian Hercules, see Ed. Meyer, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2650 *sqq.* One of the Tyrian kings seems to have been called Abi-milk (Abi-melech), that is, "father of a king" or "father of Moloch," that is, of Melcarth. A letter of his to the king of Egypt is preserved in the Tel-el-Amarna correspondence. See R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. 237. As to a title which implies that the bearer of it was the father of a god, see below, pp. 44 *sq.*

<sup>6</sup> E. Renan, quoted by Ch. Vellay, *Le culte et les fêtes d'Adonis-Thammouz*, p. 39. Mr. Cooke reads אֲדוֹן (Urimilk) instead of אֲדוֹן (Adon-milk) (G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 3, p. 18).



Some of the old Canaanite kings of Jerusalem appear to have played the part of Adonis in their lifetime, if we may judge from their names, Adoni-bezek and Adoni-zedek,<sup>1</sup> which are divine rather than human titles. Adoni-zedek means "lord of righteousness," and is therefore equivalent to Melchizedek, that is, "king of righteousness," the title of that mysterious king of Salem and priest of God Most High, who seems to have been neither more nor less than one of these same Canaanitish kings of Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Thus if the old priestly kings of Jerusalem regularly played the part of Adonis, we need not wonder that in later times the women of Jerusalem used to weep for Tammuz, that is, for Adonis, at the north gate of the temple.<sup>3</sup> In doing so they may only have been continuing a custom which had been observed in the same place by the Canaanites long before the Hebrews invaded the land. Perhaps the "sacred men," as they were called, who lodged within the walls of the temple at Jerusalem down almost to the end of the Jewish kingdom,<sup>4</sup> may have acted the part of the living Adonis to the living Astarte of the women. At all events we know that in the cells of these strange clergy women wove garments for the *asherim*,<sup>5</sup> the sacred poles which stood beside the altar and which appear to have been by some regarded as embodiments of Astarte.<sup>6</sup> Certainly these "sacred men" must have dis-

<sup>1</sup> Judges i. 4-7; Joshua x. 1 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Genesis xiv. 18-20, with Prof. S. R. Driver's commentary; *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, i. xv. "Adoni-bezek," "Adoni-zedek," "Melchizedek." It is to be observed that names compounded with Adoni- were occasionally borne by private persons. Such names are Adoni-kam (Ezra ii. 13) and Adoni-ram (1 Kings iv. 6), not to mention Adoni-jah (1 Kings i. 5 *sqq.*), who was a prince and aspired to the throne of his father David. These names are commonly interpreted as sentences expressive of the nature of the god whom the bearer of the name worshipped. See Prof. Th. Nöldeke, in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, i. v. "Names," iii. 3286. It is quite possible that names which once implied divinity were afterwards degraded by application to common men.

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel viii. 14.

<sup>4</sup> They were banished from the temple by King Josiah, who came to the throne in 637 B.C. Jerusalem fell just fifty-one years later. See 2 Kings xxiii. 7. As to these "sacred men" (*kedušim*), see below, pp. 64 *sqq.*

<sup>5</sup> 2 Kings xxiii. 7, where, following the Septuagint, we must apparently read *εργα* for the *εργα* of the Massoretic Text. So R. Kittel and J. Skinner.

<sup>6</sup> The *ashērāh* (singular of *asherim*) was certainly of wood (Judges vi. 26): it seems to have been a tree stripped of its branches and planted in the ground beside an altar, whether of Jehovah or of other gods (Deuteronomy xvi. 21; Jeremiah xvii. 2). That the *asherāh* was regarded as a goddess, the female partner of Baal, appears from 1 Kings xviii. 19; 2 Kings xxi. 3, xxiii. 4; and that this goddess was identified

charged some function which was deemed religious in the temple at Jerusalem; and we can hardly doubt that the prohibition to bring the wages of prostitution into the house of God, which was published at the very same time that the men were expelled from the temple,<sup>1</sup> was directed against an existing practice. In Palestine as in other Semitic lands the hire of sacred prostitutes was probably dedicated to the deity as one of his regular dues: he took tribute of men and women as of flocks and herds, of fields and vineyards and oliveyards.

But if Jerusalem had been from of old the seat of a dynasty of spiritual potentates or Grand Lamas, who held the keys of heaven and were revered far and wide as kings and gods in one, we can easily understand why the upstart David chose it for the capital of the new kingdom which he had won for himself at the point of the sword. The central position and the natural strength of the virgin fortress need not have been the only or the principal inducements which decided the politic monarch to transfer his throne from Hebron to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> By serving himself heir to the ancient kings of the city he might reasonably hope to inherit their ghostly repute along with their broad acres, to wear their nimbus as well as their crown.<sup>3</sup> So at a later

David as heir of the old sacred kings of Jerusalem.

with Ashtoreth (Astarte) may be inferred from a comparison of Judges ii. 13 with Judges iii. 7. Yet on the other hand the pole or tree seems by others to have been viewed as a male power (Jeremiah ii. 27; see below, p. 81), and the identification of the *asherah* with Astarte has been doubted or disputed by some eminent modern scholars. See on this subject W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 187 199.; S. R. Driver, on Deuteronomy xvi. 21; J. Skinner, on 1 Kings xiv. 23; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 173 199.; G. F. Moore, in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, s.v. "Asherah."

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy xxiii. 17 sq. (in Hebrew 18 sq.). The code of Deuteronomy was published in 621 B.C. in the reign of King Josiah, whose reforms, including the ejection of the *kedeshim* from the temple, were based

upon it. See W. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 256 199.; 353 199.; S. R. Driver, *Critical and exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*,<sup>2</sup> pp. xlv. 199.; K. Budde, *Geschichte der alttestamentlichen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 105 199.

<sup>2</sup> He reigned seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem (2 Samuel v. 5; 1 Kings ii. 11; 1 Chronicles xxii. 27).

<sup>3</sup> Professor A. H. Sayce has argued that David's original name was Elhanan (2 Samuel xxi. 19 compared with xxiii. 24), and that the name David, which he took at a later time, should be written Dod or Dodo, "the Beloved One," which according to Prof. Sayce was a name for Tammuz (Adonis) in southern Canaan, and was in particular bestowed by the Jebusites of Jerusalem on their supreme deity. See A. H.



time when he had conquered Ammon and captured the royal city of Rabbah, he took the heavy gold crown of the Ammonite god Milcom and placed it on his own brows, thus posing as the deity in person.<sup>1</sup> It can hardly, therefore, be unreasonable to suppose that he pursued precisely the same policy at the conquest of Jerusalem. And on the other side the calm confidence with which the Jebusite inhabitants of that city awaited his attack, jeering at the besiegers from the battlements,<sup>2</sup> may well have been born of a firm trust in the local deity rather than in the height and thickness of their grim old walls. Certainly the obstinacy with which in after ages the Jews defended the same place against the armies of Assyria and Rome sprang in large measure from a similar faith in the God of Zion.

Be that as it may, the history of the Hebrew kings presents some features which may perhaps, without straining them too far, be interpreted as traces or relics of a time when they or their predecessors played the part of a divinity, and particularly of Adonis, the divine lord of the land. In life the Hebrew king was regularly addressed as *Adoni-ham-melech*, "My Lord the King,"<sup>3</sup> and after

Traces of  
the divinity  
of Hebrew  
kings.

Sayce, *Lectures on the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians* (London and Edinburgh, 1887), pp. 52-57. If he is right, his conclusions would accord perfectly with those which I had reached independently, and it would become probable that David only assumed the name of David (Dad, Dodo) after the conquest of Jerusalem, and for the purpose of identifying himself with the god of the city, who had borne the same title from time immemorial. But on the whole it seems more likely, as Professor Kennett points out to me, that in the original story Elhanah, a totally different person from David, was the slayer of Goliath, and that the part of the giant-killer was thrust on David at a later time when the brightness of his fame had eclipsed that of many lesser heroes.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Samuel xii. 26-31; 1 Chronicles xx. 1-3. Critics seem generally to agree that in these passages the word *adon* must be pointed *Milcom*, not *malcham* "their king," as the Massoretic text, followed by the English

version, has it. The reading *Milcom*, which involves no change of the original Hebrew text, is supported by the reading of the Septuagint *Μολχὸν τοῦ βασιλέως αὐτῶν*, where the three last words are probably a gloss on *Μολχὸν*. See S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel*, p. 226; Dean Kirkpatrick, in his note on 2 Samuel xii. 30 (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*); *Encyclopædia Biblica*, iii. 3085; R. Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, i. 433; Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, pp. 575-79. David's son and successor adopted the worship of Milcom and made a high place for him outside Jerusalem. See 1 Kings xi. 5; 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Samuel v. 6-10; 1 Chronicles xi. 4-9.

<sup>3</sup> See for example 1 Samuel xxiv. 8; 2 Samuel xiv. 9, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 22, xv. 15, 21, xvi. 4, 9, xviii. 28, 31, 32; 1 Kings i. 2, 13, 18, 20, 21, 24, 27; 1 Chronicles xxi. 3, 23.

death he was lamented with cries of *Hoi ahi! Hoi Adon!* "Alas my brother! alas Lord!"<sup>1</sup> These exclamations of grief uttered for the death of a king of Judah were, we can hardly doubt, the very same cries which the weeping women of Jerusalem uttered in the north porch of the temple for the dead Tammuz.<sup>2</sup> However, little stress can be laid on such forms of address, since *Adon* in Hebrew, like "lord" in English, was a secular as well as a religious title. But whether identified with Adonis or not, the Hebrew kings certainly seem to have been regarded as in a sense divine, as representing and to some extent embodying Jehovah on earth. For the king's throne was called the throne of Jehovah;<sup>3</sup> and the application of the holy oil to his head was believed to impart to him directly a portion of the divine spirit.<sup>4</sup> Hence he bore the title of Messiah, which with its Greek equivalent Christ means no more than "the Anointed One."

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah xxii. 18, xxxiv. 5. In the former passage, according to the Massoretic text, the full formula of mourning was, "Alas my brother! alas sister! alas lord! alas his glory!" Who was the lamented sister? Professor T. K. Cheyne supposes that she was Astarte, and by a very slight change (אח for אה) he would read "Dodah" for "his glory," thus restoring the balance between the clauses; for "Dodah" would then answer to "Adon" (lord) as "sister" answers to "brother." I have to thank Professor Cheyne for kindly communicating this conjecture to me by letter. He writes that Dodah "is a title of Ishtar, just as Dôd is a title of Tamûs," and for evidence he refers me to the Dodah of the Moabite Stone, where, however, the reading Dodah is not free from doubt. See G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 1, pp. 1, 3, 11; *Encyclopædia Biblica*, ii. 3045; F. Baethgen, *Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, p. 234; H. Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, ii. 258. As to Hebrew names formed from the root *dôd* in the sense of "beloved," see Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, pp. 187 *sq.*; G. B. Gray, *Studies*

*in Hebrew Proper Names*, pp. 60 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> This was perceived by Renan (*Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, iii. 273), and Prof. T. K. Cheyne writes to me: "The formulae of public mourning were derived from the ceremonies of the Adonia; this Lenormant saw long ago."

<sup>3</sup> 1 Chronicles xxix. 23; 2 Chronicles ix. 8.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel xvi. 13, 14, compare *id.*, x. 1 and 10. The oil was poured on the king's head (1 Samuel x. 1; 2 Kings ix. 3, 6). For the conveyance of the divine spirit by means of oil, see also Isaiah lx. 1. The kings of Egypt appear to have consecrated their vassal Syrian kings by pouring oil on their heads. See the Tell-el-Amarna letters, No. 37 (H. Winckler, *Die Thontafeln von Tell-el-Amarna*, p. 99). Some West African priests are consecrated by a similar ceremony. See below, p. 60. In some tribes of North-West America hunters habitually anointed their hair with decoctions of certain plants and deer's brains before they set out to hunt. The practice was probably a charm to secure success in the hunt. See C. Hill-Tout, *The Home of the Salish and Déné* (London, 1907), p. 72.



Thus when David had cut off the skirt of Saul's robe in the darkness of a cave where he was in hiding, his heart smote him for having laid sacrilegious hands upon *Adoni Messiah Jehovah*, "my Lord the Anointed of Jehovah."<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrew kings seem to have been held responsible for drought and famine.

Like other divine or semi-divine rulers the Hebrew kings were apparently held answerable for famine and pestilence. When a dearth, caused perhaps by a failure of the winter rains, had visited the land for three years, King David inquired of the oracle, which discreetly laid the blame not on him but on his predecessor Saul. The dead king was indeed beyond the reach of punishment, but his sons were not. So David had seven of them sought out, and they were hanged before the Lord at the beginning of barley harvest in spring; and all the long summer the mother of two of the dead men sat under the gallows-tree, keeping off the jackals by night and the vultures by day, till with the autumn the blessed rain came at last to wet their dangling bodies and fertilise the barren earth once more. Then the bones of the dead were taken down from the gibbet and buried in the sepulchre of their fathers.<sup>2</sup> The season when these princes were put to death, at the beginning of barley harvest, and the length of time they hung on the gallows, seem to show that their execution was not a mere punishment, but that it partook of the nature of a rain-charm. For it is a common belief that rain can be procured by magical ceremonies performed with dead men's bones,<sup>3</sup> and it would be natural to ascribe a special virtue in this respect to the bones of princes, who are often expected to give rain in their life.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel xxiv. 6. Messiah in Hebrew is *Mashiah* (מָשִׁיחַ). The English form Messiah is derived from the Aramaic through the Greek. See *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, i.v. "Messiah," vol. iii. 3057 sqq. Why hair oil should be considered a vehicle of inspiration is by no means clear. It would have been intelligible if the olive had been with the Hebrews, as it was with the Athenians, a sacred tree under the immediate protection of a deity; for then a portion of the divine essence might be thought to reside in the oil. W. Robertson Smith supposed that the

unction was originally performed with the fat of a sacrificial victim, for which vegetable oil was a later substitute (*Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 383 sq.). On the whole subject see J. Wellhausen, "Zwei Rechtsriten bei den Hebräern," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, vii. (1904), pp. 33-39; H. Weil, "מָשִׁחַ und seine Derivate," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, xviii. (1898), pp. 1-82.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Samuel xxi. 1-14, with Dean Kirkpatrick's notes on 1 and 10.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 99-101.

In Israel the excess as well as the deficiency of rain seems to have been set down to the wrath of the deity.<sup>1</sup> When the Jews returned to Jerusalem from the great captivity and assembled for the first time in the square before the ruined temple, it happened that the weather was very wet, and as the people sat shelterless and drenched in the piazza they trembled at their sin and at the rain.<sup>2</sup> In all ages it has been the strength or the weakness of Israel to read the hand of God in the changing aspects of nature, and we need not wonder that at such a time and in so dismal a scene, with a lowering sky overhead, the blackened ruins of the temple before their eyes, and the steady drip of the rain over all, the returned exiles should have been oppressed with a double sense of their own guilt and of the divine anger. Perhaps, though they hardly knew it, memories of the bright sun, fat fields, and broad willow-fringed rivers of Babylon,<sup>3</sup> which had been so long their home, lent a deeper shade of sadness to the austerity of the Judæan landscape, with its gaunt gray hills stretching away, range beyond range, to the horizon, or dipping eastward to the far line of sombre blue which marks the sullen waters of the Dead Sea.<sup>4</sup>

Excessive rain set down to the wrath of the deity.

In the days of the Hebrew monarchy the king was apparently credited with the power of making sick and making whole. Thus the king of Syria sent a leper to the king of Israel to be healed by him, just as scrofulous patients used to fancy that they could be cured by the touch of a French or English king. However, the Hebrew monarch, with more sense than has been shown by his royal brothers

Hebrew kings apparently supposed to heal disease and stop epidemics.

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel xiii. 11, 13, xxxviii. 22; Jeremiah, iii. 2 *sq.* The Hebrews looked to Jehovah for rain (Leviticus xxvi. 3-5; Jeremiah v. 24) just as the Greeks looked to Zeus and the Romans to Jupiter.

<sup>2</sup> Ezra x. 9-14. The special sin which they laid to heart on this occasion was their marriage with Gentile women. It is implied, though not expressly said, that they traced the inclemency of the weather to these unfortunate alliances.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm cxxxvii.

<sup>4</sup> The line of the Dead Sea, lying in its deep trough, is visible from the Mount of Olives; indeed, so clear is the atmosphere that the blue water seems quite near the eye, though in fact it is more than fifteen miles off and nearly four thousand feet below the spectator. See Baedeker's *Palestine and Syria*,<sup>4</sup> p. 77. When the sun shines on it, the lake is of a brilliant blue (G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 501 *sq.*); but its brilliancy is naturally dimmed under clouded skies.



in modern times, professed himself unable to work any such miracle. "Am I God," he asked, "to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?"<sup>1</sup> On another occasion, when pestilence ravaged the country and the excited fancy of the plague-stricken people saw in the clouds the figure of the Destroying Angel with his sword stretched out over Jerusalem, they laid the blame on King David, who had offended the touchy and irascible deity by taking a census. The prudent monarch bowed to the popular storm, acknowledged his guilt, and appeased the angry god by offering burnt sacrifices on the threshing-floor of Araunah, one of the old Jebusite inhabitants of Jerusalem. Then the angel sheathed his flashing sword, and the shrieks of the dying and the lamentations for the dead no longer resounded in the streets.<sup>2</sup>

The rarity of references to the divinity of Hebrew kings in the historical books may be explained by the circumstances in which these works were composed or edited.

To this theory of the sanctity, nay the divinity of the Hebrew kings it may be objected that few traces of it survive in the historical books of the Bible. But the force of the objection is weakened by a consideration of the time and the circumstances in which these books assumed their final shape. The great prophets of the eighth and the seventh centuries by the spiritual ideals and the ethical fervour of their teaching had wrought a religious and moral reform perhaps unparalleled in history. Under their influence an austere monotheism had replaced the old

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings v. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Samuel xxiv. ; 1 Chronicles xxi.

In this passage, contrary to his usual practice, the Chronicler has enlivened the dull tenor of his history with some picturesque touches which we miss in the corresponding passage of Kings. It is to him that we owe the vision of the Angel of the Plague first stretching out his sword over Jerusalem and then returning it to the scabbard. From him Defoe seems to have taken a hint in his account of the prodigies, real or imaginary, which heralded the outbreak of the Great Plague in London. "One time before the plague was begun, otherwise than as I have said in St. Giles's, I think it was in March, seeing a crowd of people in the street, I joined with them to satisfy my curiosity, and found

them all staring up into the air to see what a woman told them appeared plain to her, which was an angel clothed in white with a fiery sword in his hand, waving it or brandishing it over his head. . . . One saw one thing and one another. I looked as earnestly as the rest, but, perhaps, not with so much willingness to be imposed upon; and I said, indeed, that I could see nothing but a white cloud, bright on one side, by the shining of the sun upon the other part." See Daniel Defoe, *History of the Plague in London* (Edinburgh, 1810, pp. 33 *sq.*). It is the more likely that Defoe had here the Chronicler in mind, because a few pages earlier he introduces the prophet Jonah and a man out of Josephus with very good effect.



sensuous worship of the natural powers: a stern Puritanical spirit, an unbending rigour of mind, had succeeded to the old easy supple temper with its weak compliances, its wax-like impressionability, its proclivities to the sins of the flesh. And the moral lessons which the prophets inculcated were driven home by the political events of the time, above all by the ever-growing pressure of the great Assyrian empire on the petty states of Palestine. The long agony of the siege of Samaria<sup>1</sup> must have been followed with trembling anxiety by the inhabitants of Judaea, for the danger was at their door. They had only to lift up their eyes and look north to see the blue hills of Ephraim, at whose foot lay the beleaguered city. Its final fall and the destruction of the northern kingdom could not fail to fill every thoughtful mind in the sister realm with sad forebodings. It was as if the sky had lowered and thunder muttered over Jerusalem. Thenceforth to the close of the Jewish monarchy, about a century and a half later, the cloud never passed away, though once for a little it seemed to lift, when Sennacherib raised the siege of Jerusalem<sup>2</sup> and the watchers on the walls beheld the last of the long line of spears and standards disappearing, the last squadron of the blue-coated Assyrian cavalry sweeping, in a cloud of dust, out of sight.<sup>3</sup>

It was in this period of national gloom and despondency that the two great reformations of Israel's religion were accomplished, the first by king Hezekiah, the second a century later by king Josiah.<sup>4</sup> We need not wonder then that the reformers who in that and subsequent ages composed or edited the annals of their nation should have looked as sourly on the old unreformed paganism of their forefathers as the fierce zealots of the Commonwealth looked on the far more innocent pastimes of Merry England; and

The historical books were composed or edited under the influence of the prophetic reformation.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 5 *sq.*, xviii. 9 *sq.*

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings xix. 32-36.

<sup>3</sup> We owe to Ezekiel (xxiii. 5 *sq.*, 12) the picture of the handsome Assyrian cavalymen in their blue uniforms and gorgeous trappings. The prophet writes as if in his exile by the waters of Babylon he had seen the blue regiments filing past, in all the pomp of war, on their way to the front.

<sup>4</sup> Samaria fell in 722 B.C., during

or just before the reign of Hezekiah: the Book of Deuteronomy, the cornerstone of king Josiah's reformation, was produced in 621 B.C.; and Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C. The date of Hezekiah's accession is a much-disputed point in the chronology of Judah. See the Introduction to *Kings* and *Isaiah I.-XXXIX*, by J. Skinner and O. C. Whitehouse respectively, in *The Century Bible*.

that in their zeal for the glory of God they should have blotted many pages of history lest they should perpetuate the memory of practices to which they traced the calamities of their country. All the historical books passed through the office of the Puritan censor,<sup>1</sup> and we can hardly doubt that they emerged from it stript of many gay feathers which they had flaunted when they went in. Among the shed plumage may well have been the passages which invested human beings, whether kings or commoners, with the attributes of deity. Certainly no pages could seem to the censor more rankly blasphemous; on none, therefore, was he likely to press more firmly the official sponge.

The Baal and his female Baalath the sources of all fertility.

But if Semitic kings in general and the kings of Byblus in particular often assumed the style of Baal or Adonis, it follows that they may have mated with the goddess, the Baalath or Astarte of the city. Certainly we hear of kings of Tyre and Sidon who were priests of Astarte.<sup>2</sup> Now to the agricultural Semites the Baal or god of a land was the author of all its fertility; he it was who produced the corn, the wine, the figs, the oil, and the flax, by means of his quickening waters, which in the arid parts of the Semitic world are oftener springs, streams, and underground flow than the rains of heaven.<sup>3</sup> Further, "the life-giving power of the god was not limited to vegetative nature, but to him also was ascribed the increase of animal life, the multiplication of flocks and herds, and, not least, of the human inhabitants of the land. For the increase of animate nature is obviously conditioned, in the last resort, by the fertility of the soil, and primitive races, which have not learned to differentiate the various kinds of life with precision, think of animate as well as vegetable life as

<sup>1</sup> Or the Deuteronomic redactor, as the critics call him. See W. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 395 sq., 425; *Encyclopædia Biblica*, ii. 2078 sqq., 2633 sqq., iv. 4273 sqq.; K. Badde, *Geschichte der althebräischen Litteratur* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 99, 121 sqq., 127 sqq., 132; Prof. J. Sklarer, in his introduction to *Kings* (in the *Century Bible*), pp. 10 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Menander of Ephesus, quoted by

Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, i. 18 (*Fragments Historicorum Græcorum*, ed. C. Müller, iv. 446); G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 4, p. 26. According to Justin, however, the priest of Hercules, that is, of Melcarth, at Tyre, was distinct from the king and second to him in dignity. See Justin, xviii. 4. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Hosea ii. 5 sqq.; W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 95-107.



rooted in the earth and sprung from it. The earth is the great mother of all things in most mythological philosophies, and the comparison of the life of mankind, or of a stock of men, with the life of a tree, which is so common in Semitic as in other primitive poetry, is not in its origin a mere figure. Thus where the growth of vegetation is ascribed to a particular divine power, the same power receives the thanks and homage of his worshippers for the increase of cattle and of men. Firstlings as well as first-fruits were offered at the shrines of the Baalim, and one of the commonest classes of personal names given by parents to their sons or daughters designates the child as the gift of the god." In short, "the Baal was conceived as the male principle of reproduction, the husband of the land which he fertilised."<sup>1</sup> So far, therefore, as the Semite personified the reproductive energies of nature as male and female, as a Baal and a Baalath, he appears to have identified the male power especially with water and the female especially with earth. On this view plants and trees, animals and men, are the offspring or children of the Baal and Baalath.

If, then, at Byblus and elsewhere, the Semitic king was allowed, or rather required, to personate the god and marry the goddess, the intention of the custom can only have been to ensure the fertility of the land and the increase of men and cattle by means of homoeopathic magic. There is reason to think that a similar custom was observed from a similar motive in other parts of the ancient world, and particularly at Nemi, where both the male and the female powers, the Dianus and Diana, were in one aspect of their nature personifications of the life-giving waters.<sup>2</sup>

The last king of Byblus bore the ancient name of Cinyras, and was beheaded by Pompey the Great for his tyrannous excesses.<sup>3</sup> His legendary namesake Cinyras is said to have founded a sanctuary of Aphrodite, that is, of Astarte, at a place on Mount Lebanon, distant a day's journey from the capital.<sup>4</sup> The spot was probably Aphaca,

Personation of the Baal by the king.

<sup>1</sup> W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 197 sq. 1905), pp. 152 sqq., 194 sqq., 213 sqq., 283 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> See my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship* (London, 1905), p. 755.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xvi. 1. 18, p. 755.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 9.



Aphaca  
and the  
vale of the  
Adonis.

at the source of the river Adonis, half-way between Byblus and Baalbec; for at Aphaca there was a famous grove and sanctuary of Astarte which Constantine destroyed on account of the flagitious character of the worship.<sup>1</sup> The site of the temple has been discovered by modern travellers near the miserable village which still bears the name of Aska at the head of the wild, romantic, wooded gorge of the Adonis. The hamlet stands among groves of noble walnut-trees on the brink of the lyn. A little way off the river rushes from a cavern at the foot of a mighty amphitheatre of towering cliffs to plunge in a series of cascades into the awful depths of the glen. The deeper it descends, the ranker and denser grows the vegetation, which, sprouting from the crannies and fissures of the rocks, spreads a green veil over the roaring or murmuring stream in the tremendous chasm below. There is something delicious, almost intoxicating, in the freshness of these tumbling waters, in the sweetness and purity of the mountain air, in the vivid green of the vegetation. The temple, of which some massive hewn blocks and a fine column of Syenite granite still mark the site, occupied a terrace facing the source of the river and commanding a magnificent prospect. Across the foam and the roar of the waterfalls you look up to the cavern and away to the top of the sublime precipices above. So lofty is the cliff that the goats which creep along its ledges to browse on the bushes appear like ants to the spectator hundreds of feet below. Seaward the view is especially impressive when the sun floods the profound gorge with golden light, revealing all the fantastic buttresses and rounded towers of its mountain rampart, and falling softly on the varied green of the woods which clothe its depths.<sup>2</sup> It was here that, according

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, iii. 55; Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ii. 5; Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. 18; Zosimus, i. 58.

<sup>2</sup> On the valley of the Nahr Ibrahim, its scenery and monuments, see Edward Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 603-609; W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book, Lebanon, Damascus, and beyond Jordan* (London,

1886), pp. 239-246; E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, pp. 282 sqq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 175-179. Among the trees which line the valley are oak, sycamore, bay, plane, orange, and mulberry (W. M. Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 245). Travellers are unanimous in testifying to the extraordinary beauty of the vale of the Adonis. Thus Robinson writes:

to the legend, Adonis met Aphrodite for the first or the last time,<sup>1</sup> and here his mangled body was buried.<sup>2</sup> A fairer scene could hardly be imagined for a story of tragic love and death. Yet, sequestered as the valley is and must always have been, it is not wholly deserted. A convent or a village may be observed here and there standing out against the sky on the top of some beetling crag, or clinging to the face of a nearly perpendicular cliff high above the foam and the din of the river; and at evening the lights that twinkle through the gloom betray the presence of human habitations on slopes which might seem inaccessible to man. In antiquity the whole of the lovely vale appears to have been dedicated to Adonis, and to this day it is haunted by his memory; for the heights which shut it in are crested at various points by ruined monuments of his worship, some of them overhanging dreadful abysses, down which it turns the head dizzy to look and see the eagles wheeling about their nests far below. One such monument exists at Ghineh. The face of a great rock, above a roughly hewn recess, is here carved with figures of Adonis and Aphrodite. He is portrayed with spear in rest, awaiting the attack of a bear, while she is seated in an attitude of sorrow.<sup>3</sup> Her grief-stricken figure may well be the mourning Aphrodite of the Lebanon described by Macrobius,<sup>4</sup> and the recess in the rock is perhaps her lover's tomb. Every year, in the belief of his worshippers, Adonis was wounded to death on the mountains, and every year the face of nature itself was dyed with his sacred blood. So year by year the

"There is no spot in all my wanderings on which memory lingers with greater delight than on the sequestered retreat and exceeding loveliness of Afka." Renan says that the landscape is one of the most beautiful in the world. My friend Mr. Francis Galton writes to me (20th September 1906): "I have no good map of Palestine, but strongly suspect that my wanderings there, quite sixty years ago, took me to the place you mention, above the gorge of the river Adonis. Be that as it may, I have constantly asserted that the view I then had of a deep ravine and blue sea seen through

the cliffs that bounded it, was the most beautiful I had ever set eyes on."

<sup>1</sup> *Etymologicum Magnum*, i. v. *Aphana*, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Meliton, "Oration to Antoninus Caesar," in W. Cureton's *Spicilegium Syriacum* (London, 1855), p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie*, pp. 292-294. The writer seems to have no doubt that the beast attacking Adonis is a bear, not a boar. A view of the monument is given by A. Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients*<sup>2</sup> (Leipzig, 1906), p. 90.

<sup>4</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 21. 5.

Syrian damsels lamented his untimely fate,<sup>1</sup> while the red anemone, his flower, bloomed among the cedars of Lebanon and the river ran red to the sea, fringing the winding shores of the blue Mediterranean, whenever the wind set inshore, with a sinuous band of crimson.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 8.



## CHAPTER III

### ADONIS IN CYPRUS

THE island of Cyprus lies but one day's sail from the coast of Syria. Indeed, on fine summer evenings its mountains may be descried looming low and dark against the red fires of sunset.<sup>1</sup> With its rich mines of copper and its forests of firs and stately cedars, the island naturally attracted a commercial and maritime people like the Phoenicians; while the abundance of its corn, its wine, and its oil must have rendered it in their eyes a Land of Promise by comparison with the niggardly nature of their own rugged coast, hemmed in between the mountains and the sea.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly they settled in Cyprus at a very early date and remained there long after the Greeks had also established themselves on its shores; for we know from inscriptions and coins that Phoenician kings reigned at Citium, the Chittim of the Hebrews, down to the time of Alexander the Great.<sup>3</sup>

Phoenician colonies in Cyprus.

<sup>1</sup> F. C. Movers, *Die Phœnizier*, ii. 2, p. 224; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 199; G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> On the natural wealth of Cyprus see Strabo, xiv. 6. 5; W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, i. 40-71; F. C. Movers, *Die Phœnizier*, ii. 2, pp. 224 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 200 sq.; E. Oberhummer, *Die Insel Cypern*, i. (Munich, 1903), pp. 175 sqq., 243 sqq. As to the firs and cedars of Cyprus see Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, v. 7. 1, v. 9. 1. The Cyprians boasted that they could build and rig a ship complete, from

her keel to her topsails, with the native products of their island (Ammianus Marcellinus, xiv. 8. 14).

<sup>3</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of Semitic Inscriptions*, Nos. 12-25, pp. 55-76, 347-349; P. Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, pp. 179, 185. It has been held that the name of Citium is etymologically identical with Hittite. If that was so, it would seem that the town was built and inhabited by a non-Semitic people before the arrival of the Phoenicians. See *Encyclopædia Biblica*, i.e. "Kittim." Other traces of this older race, akin to the primitive stock of Asia Minor, have been detected in Cyprus; amongst them the

Naturally the Semitic colonists brought their gods with them from the mother-land. They worshipped Baal of the Lebanon,<sup>1</sup> who may well have been Adonis, and at Amathus on the south coast they instituted the rites of Adonis and Aphrodite, or rather Astarte.<sup>2</sup> Here, as at Byblus, these rites resembled the Egyptian worship of Osiris so closely that some people even identified the Adonis of Amathus with Osiris.<sup>3</sup> The Tyrian Melcarth or Moloch was also worshipped at Amathus,<sup>4</sup> and the tombs discovered in the neighbourhood prove that the city remained Phœnician to a late period.<sup>5</sup>

Kingdom  
of Paphos.

But the great seat of the worship of Aphrodite and Adonis in Cyprus was Paphos on the south-western side of the island. Among the petty kingdoms into which Cyprus was divided from the earliest times until the end of the fourth century before our era Paphos must have ranked with the best. It is a land of hills and billowy ridges, diversified by fields and vineyards and intersected by rivers, which in the course of ages have carved for themselves beds of such tremendous depth that travelling in the interior is difficult and tedious. The lofty range of Mount Olympus (the modern Troodos), capped with snow the greater part of the year, screens Paphos from the northerly and easterly winds and cuts it off from the rest of the island. On the slopes of the range the last pine-woods of Cyprus linger, sheltering here and there monasteries in scenery not unworthy of the Apennines. The old city of

most obvious is the Cyprian syllabary, the characters of which are neither Phœnician nor Greek in origin. See P. Gardner, *op. cit.* pp. 154, 173-175, 178 sq.

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 11, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Ἀμαθούς; Pausanias, ix. 41. 2 sq. According to Pausanias, there was a remarkable necklace of green stones and gold in the sanctuary of Adonis and Aphrodite at Amathus. The Greeks commonly identified it with the necklace of Harmonia or Eriphyle. A terra-cotta statuette of Astarte, found at Amathus (?), represents her wearing a necklace which she touches with one hand. See L. P. di Cesnola,

*Cyprus* (London, 1877), p. 275. The scanty ruins of Amathus occupy an isolated hill beside the sea. Among them is an enormous stone jar, half buried in the earth, of which the four handles are adorned with figures of bulls. It is probably of Phœnician manufacture. See L. Ross, *Reisen nach Kar, Halikarnassos, Rhodes und der Insel Cypern* (Halle, 1852), pp. 168 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Ἀμαθούς. For the relation of Adonis to Osiris at Byblus see below, pp. 272, 357.

<sup>4</sup> Hesychius, s.v. Μάλκα.

<sup>5</sup> L. P. di Cesnola, *Cyprus*, pp. 254-283; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 216-222.



Paphos occupied the summit of a hill about a mile from the sea; the newer city sprang up at the harbour some ten miles off.<sup>1</sup> The sanctuary of Aphrodite at Old Paphos (the modern Kuklia) was one of the most celebrated shrines in the ancient world. From the earliest to the latest times it would seem to have preserved its essential features unchanged. For the sanctuary is represented on coins of the Imperial age,<sup>2</sup> and these representations agree closely with little golden models of a shrine which were found in two of the royal graves at Mycenae.<sup>3</sup> Both on the coins and in the models we see a façade surmounted by a pair of doves and divided into three compartments or chapels, of which the central one is crowned by a lofty superstructure. In the golden models each chapel contains a pillar standing in a pair of horns: the central superstructure is crowned by two pairs of horns, one within the other; and the two side chapels are in like manner crowned each with a pair of horns and a single dove perched on the outer horn of each pair. On the coins each of the side chapels contains a pillar or candelabra-like object: the central chapel contains a cone and is flanked by two high columns, each terminating in a pair of ball-topped pinnacles, with a star and crescent appearing between the tops of the columns. The doves are doubtless the sacred doves of Aphrodite or Astarte,<sup>4</sup> and the horns and pillars remind us of the similar religious emblems which

Sanctuary  
of  
Aphrodite  
at Paphos

<sup>1</sup> D. G. Hogarth, *Devia Cypria* (London, 1889), pp. 1-3; *Encyclopædia Britannica*,<sup>9</sup> vi. 747; É. Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, ix. 668.

<sup>2</sup> T. L. Donaldson, *Architectura Numismatica*, pp. 107-109, with fig. 31; *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 210-213; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Cyprus* (London, 1904), pp. cxxvii-cxxix, with plates xiv. 2, 3, 6-8, xv. 1-4, 7, xvi. 2, 4, 6-9, xvii. 4-6, 8, 9, xvi. 3, 6-16; George Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, ii. 566, with pl. lxi. 19. As to the existing remains of the temple, which were excavated by an English expedition in 1887-1888, see *Journal*

*of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888), pp. 193 sqq. Previous accounts of the temple are inaccurate and untrustworthy.

<sup>3</sup> C. Schuchhardt, *Schliemann's Ausgrabungen*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 231-233; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, vi. 336 sq., 652-654; *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 213 sq.; P. Gardner, *New Chapters in Greek History*, p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> J. Selden, *De diis Syris* (Leipzig, 1668) pp. 274 sqq.; S. Bochart, *Hierozoicon*, li. 4 sqq. Compare the statue of a priest with a dove in his hand, which was found in Cyprus (Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 510, with fig. 349).



have been found in the great prehistoric palace of Cnossus in Crete, as well as on many monuments of the Mycenaean or Minoan age of Greece.<sup>1</sup> If antiquaries are right in regarding the golden models as copies of the Paphian shrine, that shrine must have suffered little outward change for more than a thousand years; for the royal graves at Mycenae, in which the models were found, can hardly be of later date than the twelfth century before our era.

The  
Aphrodite  
of Paphos  
a Phoeni-  
cian or  
aboriginal  
deity.

Thus the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos was apparently of great antiquity.<sup>2</sup> According to Herodotus, it was founded by Phoenician colonists from Ascalon;<sup>3</sup> but it is possible that a native goddess of fertility was worshipped on the spot before the arrival of the Phoenicians, and that the newcomers identified her with their own Baalath or Astarte, whom she may have closely resembled. If two deities were thus fused in one, we may suppose that they were both varieties of that great goddess of motherhood and fertility whose worship appears to have been diffused all over Western Asia from a very early time. The supposition is confirmed as well by the archaic shape of her image as by the licentious character of her rites; for both that shape and those rites were shared by her with other Asiatic deities. Her image was simply a white cone or pyramid.<sup>4</sup> In like manner, a cone was the emblem of Astarte at Byblus,<sup>5</sup> of the native goddess whom the Greeks called

Her  
conical  
image.

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Evans, "Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxi. (1901) pp. 99-109.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, iii. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, i. 105; compare Pausanias, i. 14. 7. Herodotus only speaks of the sanctuary of Aphrodite in Cyprus, but he must refer to the great one at Paphos. At Ascalon the goddess was worshipped in mermaid-shape under the name of Derceto, and fish and doves were sacred to her (Diodorus Siculus, ii. 4; compare Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 14). The name Derceto, like the much more correct Atargatis, is a Greek corruption of 'Aštār, the Aramaic form of Astarte. See E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 246 sq.

<sup>4</sup> It is described by ancient writers and figured on coins. See Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 3; Maximus Tyrius, *Dissert.* viii. 8; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* i. 720; T. L. Donaldson, *Architectura Numismatica*, p. 107, with fig. 31; *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 210-212. According to Maximus Tyrius, the material of the pyramid was unknown. Probably it was a stone. The English archaeologists found several fragments of white cones on the site of the temple at Paphos: one which still remains in its original position in the central chamber was of limestone and of somewhat larger size (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) p. 180).

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 11.

Artemis at Perga in Pamphylia,<sup>1</sup> and of the sun-god Heliogabalus at Emesa in Syria.<sup>2</sup> Conical stones, which apparently served as idols, have also been found at Golgi in Cyprus, and in the Phœnician temples of Malta;<sup>3</sup> and cones of sandstone recently came to light at the shrine of the "Mistress of Torquoise" among the barren hills and frowning precipices of Sinai.<sup>4</sup> The precise significance of such an emblem remains as obscure as it was in the time of Tacitus.<sup>5</sup> It appears to have been customary to anoint the sacred cone with olive oil at a solemn festival, in which people from Lycia and Caria participated.<sup>6</sup> The custom of anointing a holy stone has been observed in many parts of the world, for example, in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi.<sup>7</sup> To this day the old custom appears to survive at Paphos, for "in honour of the Maid of Bethlehem the peasants of Kuklia

<sup>1</sup> On coins of Perga the sacred cone is represented as richly decorated and standing in a temple between sphinxes. See B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 385; P. Gardner, *Types of Greek Coins*, pl. xv. No. 3; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycia, Pamphylia, and Pisidia* (London, 1897), pl. xxiv. 12, 15, 16. However, Mr. G. F. Hill writes to me: "Is the stone at Perga really a cone? I have always thought it was a cube or something of that kind. On the coins the upper, sloping portion is apparently an elaborate veil or head-dress. The head attached to the stone is seen in the middle of this, surmounted by a tall *kalathos*." The sanctuary stood on a height, and a festival was held there annually (Strabo, xiv. 4. 2, p. 667). The native title of the goddess was *Anassa*, that is, "Queen." See B. V. Head, *loc. cit.*; Wernicke in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopædie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ii. 1, col. 1397. Aphrodite at Paphos bore the same title. See below, p. 38, note 1. The worship of Pergæan Artemis at Halicarnassus was cared for by a priestess, who held office for life and had to make intercession for the city at every new moon. See Dittenberger, *Syllage Inscriptionum Græcarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 601.

<sup>2</sup> Herodian, v. 3. 5. This cone

was of black stone, with some small knobs on it, like the stone of Cybele at Pessinus. It is figured on coins of Emesa. See B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 659; P. Gardner, *Types of Greek Coins*, pl. xv. No. 1. The sacred stone of Cybele, which the Romans brought from Pessinus to Rome during the Second Punic War, was small, black, and rugged, but we are not told that it was of conical shape. See Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 49; Livy, xxix. 11. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 273, 298 sq., 304 sq. The sanctuary of Aphrodite, or rather Astarte, at Golgi is said to have been even more ancient than her sanctuary at Paphos (Pausanias, viii. 5. 2).

<sup>4</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* (London, 1906), pp. 135 sq., 189. Votive cones made of clay have been found in large numbers in Babylonia, particularly at Lagash and Nippur. See M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 672-674.

<sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 3.

<sup>6</sup> We learn this from an inscription found at Paphos. See *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 188, 231.

<sup>7</sup> Pausanias, x. 24. 6, with my note.



anointed lately, and probably still anoint each year, the great corner-stones of the ruined Temple of the Paphian Goddess. As Aphrodite was supplicated once with cryptic rites, so is Mary entreated still by Moslems as well as Christians, with incantations and passings through perforated stones, to remove the curse of barrenness from Cypriote women, or increase the manhood of Cypriote men."<sup>1</sup> Thus the ancient worship of the goddess of fertility is continued under a different name. Even the name of the old goddess is retained in some parts of the island; for in more than one chapel the Cypriote peasants adore the mother of Christ under the title of Panaghia Aphroditessa.<sup>2</sup>

Sacred  
prostitution  
in the  
worship of  
the Paphian  
Aphrodite  
and of  
other  
Asiatic  
goddesses.

In Cyprus it appears that before marriage all women were formerly obliged by custom to prostitute themselves to strangers at the sanctuary of the goddess, whether she went by the name of Aphrodite, Astarte, or what not.<sup>3</sup> Similar customs prevailed in many parts of Western Asia. Whatever its motive, the practice was clearly regarded, not as an orgy of lust, but as a solemn religious duty performed in the service of that great Mother Goddess of Western Asia whose name varied, while her type remained constant, from place to place. Thus at Babylon every woman, whether rich or poor, had once in her life to submit to the embraces of a stranger at the temple of Mylitta, that is, of Ishtar or Astarte, and to dedicate to the goddess the wages earned by this sanctified harlotry. The sacred precinct was crowded with women waiting to observe the custom. Some of them had to wait there for years.<sup>4</sup> At Heliopolis or Baalbec in Syria, famous for the imposing grandeur of its ruined temples, the custom of the country

<sup>1</sup> D. G. Hogarth, *A Wandering Scholar in the Levant* (London, 1896), pp. 179 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 628.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, i. 199; Athenaeus, xii. 11, p. 516 A; Justin, xviii. 5. 4; Lactantius, *Divin. Inst.* i. 17; W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, ii. 142 sqq. Asiatic customs of this sort have been rightly explained by W. Mannhardt (*Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 283 sqq.).

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, i. 199; Strabo, xvi. 1.

20, p. 745. As to the identity of Mylitta with Astarte see H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Kleininschriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 423, n. 7, 428, n. 4. According to him, the name Mylitta comes from 'Mu 'allidtu, "she who helps women in travail." In this character Ishtar would answer to the Greek Artemis and the Latin Diana. As to sacred prostitution in the worship of Ishtar see M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 475 sq., 484 sq.



required that every maiden should prostitute herself to a stranger at the temple of Astarte, and matrons as well as maids testified their devotion to the goddess in the same manner. The emperor Constantine abolished the custom, destroyed the temple, and built a church in its stead.<sup>1</sup> In Phœnician temples women prostituted themselves for hire in the service of religion, believing that by this conduct they propitiated the goddess and won her favour.<sup>2</sup> At Byblus the people shaved their heads in the annual mourning for Adonis. Women who refused to sacrifice their hair had to give themselves up to strangers on a certain day of the festival, and the money which they thus earned was devoted to the goddess.<sup>3</sup> This custom may have been a mitigation of an older rule which at Byblus as elsewhere formerly compelled every

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, iii. 58; Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. 18. 7-9; Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, v. 10. 7. Socrates says that at Heliopolis local custom obliged the women to be held in common, so that paternity was unknown, "for there was no distinction of parents and children, and the people prostituted their daughters to the strangers who visited them" (τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔδοξε). The prostitution of matrons as well as of maids is mentioned by Eusebius. As he was born and spent his life in Syria, and was a contemporary of the practices he describes, the bishop of Caesarea had the best opportunity of informing himself as to them, and we ought not, as Prof. M. P. Nilsson does (*Griechische Feste*, p. 366 n.<sup>2</sup>), to allow his positive testimony on this point to be outweighed by the silence of the later historian Sozomenus, who wrote long after the custom had been abolished. Eusebius had good reason to know the heathenish customs which were kept up in his diocese; for he was sharply taken to task by Constantine for allowing sacrifices to be offered on altars under the sacred oak or terebinth at Mamre; and in obedience to the imperial commands he caused the altars to be destroyed and an oratory to be built instead under the tree. So in Ireland the ancient heathen

sanctuaries under the sacred oaks were converted by Christian missionaries into churches and monasteries. See Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. 18; and my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 225 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Athanasius, *Oratio contra Gentes*, 26 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, xxv. 52), γενναίαι γοῦν ἐν εἰδωλείᾳ τῆς Φοινίκης πάλαι προσκαθίζοντα, ἀπαρχόμεναι τοῖς ἐκὼν θέοις τὰν τῶν τοῦ σώματος αὐτῶν μισθαρίας, κομίζουσαι τῇ κορρείᾳ τῆς θεῆς τὰν τῶν ἱλαστέων καὶ εἰς ἐπαγγελίαν ἄγειν αὐτῆς διὰ τοῦτων. The account of the Phœnician custom which is given by H. Ploss (*Das Weib*,<sup>2</sup> i. 302) and repeated after him by Fr. Schwally (*Semitische Kriegeraltertümer*, pp. 76 sq.) may rest only on a misapprehension of this passage of Athanasius. But if it is correct, we may conjecture that the slaves who deflowered the virgins were the sacred slaves of the temples, the *hedeshim*, and that they discharged this office as the living representatives of the god. As to these *hedeshim*, or "sacred men," see above, pp. 14 sq., and below, pp. 64 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 6. The writer is careful to indicate that none but strangers were allowed to enjoy the women (ἡ δὲ ἀγορὴ πόλεως ἐξένοισι παρὰ τῆς πόλεως).

woman without exception to sacrifice her virtue in the service of religion. I have elsewhere suggested a reason why the offering of a woman's hair was accepted as an equivalent for the surrender of her person.<sup>1</sup> We are told that in Lydia all girls were obliged to prostitute themselves in order to earn a dowry;<sup>2</sup> but we may suspect that the real motive of the custom was devotion rather than economy. The suspicion is confirmed by a Greek inscription found at Tralles in Lydia, which proves that the practice of religious prostitution survived in that country as late as the second century of our era. It records of a certain woman, Aurelia Aemilia by name, not only that she herself served the god in the capacity of a harlot at his express command, but that her mother and other female ancestors had done the same before her; and the publicity of the record, engraved on a marble column which supported a votive offering, shows that no stain attached to such a life and such a parentage.<sup>3</sup> In Armenia the noblest families dedicated their daughters to the service of the goddess Anaitis in her temple at Acilisena, where the damsels acted as prostitutes for a long time before they were given in marriage. Nobody scrupled to take one of these girls to wife when her period of service was over.<sup>4</sup> Again, the goddess Ma was served by a multitude of sacred harlots at Comana in Pontus, and crowds of men and women flocked to her sanctuary from the neighbouring cities and country to attend the biennial festivals or to pay their vows to the goddess.<sup>5</sup>

The Asiatic Mother Goddess a personification of all the reproductive energies of nature.

If we survey the whole of the evidence on this subject, some of which has still to be laid before the reader, we may conclude that a great Mother Goddess, the personification of all the reproductive energies of nature, was worshipped under different names but with a substantial similarity of myth and

<sup>1</sup> "Artemis and Hippolytus," *Fortnightly Review*, December 1904, pp. 985-988.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, i. 93 sq.; Athenaeus, xii. 11, pp. 515 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, vii. (1883) p. 276; W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 94 sq., 115.

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, xi. 14. 16, p. 532.

<sup>5</sup> Strabo, xii. 3. 32, 34 and 36, pp. 557-559; compare xii. 2. 3, p. 535. Other sanctuaries in Pontus, Cappadocia, and Phrygia swarmed with sacred slaves, and we may conjecture, though we are not told, that many of these slaves were prostitutes. See Strabo, xi. 8. 4, xii. 2. 3 and 6, xii. 3. 31 and 37, xii. 8. 14.



ritual by many peoples of Western Asia; that associated with her was a lover, or rather series of lovers, divine yet mortal, with whom she mated year by year, their commerce being deemed essential to the propagation of animals and plants, each in their several kind;<sup>1</sup> and further, that the fabulous union of the divine pair was simulated and, as it were, multiplied on earth by the real, though temporary, union of the human sexes at the sanctuary of the goddess for the sake of thereby ensuring the fruitfulness of the ground and the increase of man and beast.<sup>2</sup> And if the conception of such a Mother Goddess dates, as seems probable, from a time when the institution of marriage was either unknown or at most barely tolerated as an immoral infringement of old communal rights, we can understand both why the goddess herself was regularly supposed to be at once unmarried and unchaste, and why her worshippers were obliged to imitate her more or less completely in these respects. For had she been a divine wife united to a divine husband, the natural counterpart of their union would have been the lawful marriage of men and women, and there would have been no need to resort to a system of prostitution or promiscuity in order to effect those purposes which, on the principles of homoeopathic magic, might in that case have been as well or better attained by the legitimate intercourse of the sexes in matrimony. Formerly, perhaps, every woman was obliged to submit at least once in her life to the exercise of those marital rights which at a still earlier period had theoretically belonged in permanence to all the

Her  
worship  
perhaps  
reflects a  
period of  
sexual com-  
munism.

<sup>1</sup> On this great Asiatic goddess and her lovers see especially W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 87 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Compare W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 284 sq.; W. Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, New Edition (London, 1902), pp. 171-174. Similarly in Camul, formerly a province of the Chinese empire, the men used to place their wives at the disposal of any foreigners who came to lodge with them, and deemed it an honour if the guests made use of their opportunities. The emperor, hearing of the custom, forbade the people to

observe it. For three years they obeyed, then, finding that their lands were no longer fruitful and that many mishaps befell them, they prayed the emperor to allow them to retain the custom, "for it was by reason of this usage that their gods bestowed upon them all the good things that they possessed, and without it they saw not how they could continue to exist" (Marco Polo, translated by Col. Henry Yule (London, 1875), i. 212 sq.). Here apparently the fertility of the soil was deemed to depend on the intercourse of the women with strangers, not with their husbands.



males of the tribe. But in course of time, as the institution of individual marriage grew in favour, and the old communism fell more and more into discredit, the revival of the ancient practice even for a single occasion in a woman's life became ever more repugnant to the moral sense of the people, and accordingly they resorted to various expedients for evading in practice the obligation which they still acknowledged in theory. One of these evasions was to let the woman offer her hair instead of her person; another apparently was to substitute an obscene symbol for the obscene act.<sup>1</sup> But while the majority of women thus contrived to observe the forms of religion without sacrificing their virtue, it was still thought necessary to the general welfare that a certain number of them should discharge the old obligation in the old way. These became prostitutes either for life or for a term of years at one of the temples: dedicated to the service of religion, they were invested with a sacred character,<sup>2</sup> and their vocation, far from being deemed infamous, was probably long regarded by the laity as an exercise of more than common virtue, and rewarded with a tribute of mixed wonder, reverence, and pity, not unlike that which in some parts of the world is still paid to women who seek to honour their Creator in a different way by renouncing the natural functions of their sex and the tenderest relations of humanity. It is thus that the folly of mankind finds vent in opposite extremes alike harmful and deplorable.

The  
daughters  
of Cinyras.

At Paphos the custom of religious prostitution is said to have been instituted by King Cinyras,<sup>3</sup> and to have been practised by his daughters, the sisters of Adonis, who, having incurred the wrath of Aphrodite, mated with strangers and ended their days in Egypt.<sup>4</sup> In this form of the tradition the wrath of Aphrodite is probably a feature added by a later authority, who could only regard conduct which shocked his own moral sense as a punishment inflicted

<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 14, p. 13, ed. Potter; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 19; compare Firmicus Maternus, *De err. profan. relig.* 10.

<sup>2</sup> In Hebrew a temple harlot was regularly called "a sacred woman" (*kôdēsha*). See *Encyclopædia Biblica*, s.v. "Harlot";

S. R. Driver, on Genesis xxxviii. 21. As to such "sacred women," see below, pp. 62-199.

<sup>3</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 13, p. 12, ed. Potter; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 19; Firmicus Maternus, *De err. profan. relig.* 10.

<sup>4</sup> Apollodorus, iii. 14. 3.

by the goddess instead of as a sacrifice regularly enjoined by her on all her devotees. At all events the story indicates that the princesses of Paphos had to conform to the custom as well as women of humble birth.

The legendary history of the royal and priestly family of the Cinyrads is instructive. We are told that a Syrian man, by name Sandacus, migrated to Cilicia, married Pharnace, daughter of Megassares, king of Hyria, and founded the city of Celenderis. His wife bore him a son, Cinyras, who in time crossed the sea with a company of people to Cyprus, wedded Metharme, daughter of Pygmalion, king of the island, and founded Paphos.<sup>1</sup> These legends seem to contain reminiscences of kingdoms in Cilicia and Cyprus which passed in the female line, and were held by men, sometimes foreigners, who married the hereditary princesses. There are some indications that Cinyras was not in fact the founder of the temple at Paphos. An older tradition ascribed the foundation to a certain Acrias, whom some regarded as a king, and others as the goddess herself.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Cinyras or his descendants at Paphos had to reckon with rivals. These were the Tamirads, a family of diviners who traced their descent from Tamiras, a Cilician augur. At first it was arranged that both families should preside at the ceremonies, but afterwards the Tamirads gave way to the Cinyrads.<sup>3</sup> Many tales were told of Cinyras, the founder of the dynasty. He was a priest of Aphrodite as well as a king,<sup>4</sup> and his riches passed into a proverb.<sup>5</sup> To his descendants, the

The  
Paphian  
dynasty  
of the  
Cinyrads.

<sup>1</sup> Apollodorus, lib. 14. 3. I follow the text of R. Wagner's edition in reading *Μεγαράδου τῆς Ὑπέρης βασιλίσσης*. As to Hyria in Issuria see Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Ὑπέρη. The city of Celenderis, on the south coast of Cilicia, possessed a small harbour protected by a fortified peninsula. Many ancient tombs survived till recent times, but have now mostly disappeared. It was the port from which the Turkish couriers from Constantinople used to embark for Cyprus. As to the situation and remains see F. Beaufort, *Karmania* (London, 1817), p. 201; W. M. Leake, *Journal of a Tour in*

*Asia Minor* (London, 1824), pp. 114-118; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosoph.-historische Classe*, xlv. (1896), No. vi. p. 94. The statement that the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos was founded by the Arcadian Agapenor, who planted a colony in Cyprus after the Trojan war (Pausanias, viii. 5. 2), may safely be disregarded.

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* ii. 3, *Annals*, lib. 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 3; Hesychius, s.v. *Ταμιαδῶν*.

<sup>4</sup> Pindar, *Pyth.* ii. 13-17.

<sup>5</sup> Tyrtæus, xii. 6 (*Poetæ Lyrici*



rule of descent have furnished a motive for incest with a daughter? For it seems a natural corollary from such a rule that the king was bound to vacate the throne on the death of his wife, the queen, since he occupied it only by virtue of his marriage with her. When that marriage terminated, his right to the throne terminated with it and passed at once to his daughter's husband. Hence if the king desired to reign after his wife's death, the only way in which he could legitimately continue to do so was by marrying his daughter, and thus prolonging through her the title which had formerly been his through her mother.

The  
Flamen  
Dialis  
and his  
Flaminica  
at Rome.

In this connection it is worth while to remember that at Rome the Flamen Dialis was bound to vacate his priesthood on the death of his wife, the Flaminica.<sup>1</sup> The rule would be intelligible if the Flaminica had originally been the more important functionary of the two, and if the Flamen held office only by virtue of his marriage with her.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere I have shown reason to suppose that he and his wife represented an old line of priestly kings and queens, who played the parts of Jupiter and Juno, or perhaps rather Dianus and Diana, respectively.<sup>3</sup> If the supposition is correct, the custom which obliged him to resign his priesthood on the death of his wife seems to prove that of the two deities whom they personated, the goddess, whether named Juno or Diana, was indeed the better half. But at Rome the goddess Juno always played an insignificant part; whereas at Nemi her old double, Diana, was all-powerful, casting her mate, Dianus or Virbius, into deep shadow. Thus a rule which points to the superiority of the Flaminica over the Flamen, appears to indicate that the divine originals of the two were Dianus and Diana rather than Jupiter and Juno, and further, that if Jupiter and Juno at Rome stood for the principle of father-kin, or the predominance of the husband over the wife,

common in royal families. See my note on Pausanias, i. 7. 1 (vol. ii. pp. 84 sq.); as to the case of Egypt see below, pp. 396 sq. The true explanation of the custom was first, so far as I know, indicated by J. F. McLennan (*The Patriarchal Theory*, p. 95).

<sup>1</sup> Aulus Gellius, x. 15. 22; J.

Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 328.

<sup>2</sup> Priestesses are said to have preceded priests in some Egyptian cities. See W. M. Flinders Petrie, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt*, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 202 sq., 214 sqq.



Dianus and Diana at Nemi stood for the older principle of mother-kin, or the predominance of the wife in matters of inheritance over the husband. If, then, I am right in holding that the kingship at Rome was originally a plebeian institution and descended through women,<sup>1</sup> we must conclude that the people who founded the sanctuary of Diana at Nemi were of the same plebeian stock as the Roman kings, that they traced descent in the female line, and that they worshipped a great Mother Goddess, not a great Father God. That goddess was Diana; her maternal functions are abundantly proved by the votive offerings found at her ancient shrine among the wooded hills.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the patricians, who afterwards invaded the country, brought with them father-kin in its strictest form, and consistently enough paid their devotions rather to Father Jove than to Mother Juno.

A parallel to what I conjecture to have been the original relation of the Flaminica to her husband the Flamen may to a certain extent be found among the Khasis of Assam, who preserve to this day the ancient system of mother-kin in matters of inheritance and religion. For among these people the propitiation of deceased ancestors is deemed essential to the welfare of the community, and of all their ancestors they revere most the primaeval ancestress of the clan. Accordingly in every sacrifice a priest must be assisted by a priestess; indeed, we are told that he merely acts as her deputy, and that she "is without doubt a survival of the time when, under the matriarchate, the priestess was the agent for the performance of all religious ceremonies." It does not appear that the priest need be the husband of the priestess; but in the Khyrim State, where each division has its own goddess to whom sacrifices are offered, the priestess is the mother, sister, niece, or other maternal relation of the priest. It is her duty to prepare all the sacrificial articles, and without her assistance the sacrifice cannot take place.<sup>3</sup> Here, then, as among the ancient Romans on my hypothesis, we have the superiority of the priestess over the priest based on a corresponding

Priestesses  
among the  
Khasis of  
Assam.

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 231 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Major P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1907), pp. 109-112, 120 sq.

superiority of the goddess or divine ancestress over the god or divine ancestor; and here, as at Rome, a priest would clearly have to vacate office if he had no woman of the proper relationship to assist him in the performance of his sacred duties.

Cinyras  
beloved by  
Aphrodite

Cinyras is said to have been famed for his exquisite beauty<sup>1</sup> and to have been wooed by Aphrodite herself.<sup>2</sup> Thus it would appear, as scholars have already observed,<sup>3</sup> that Cinyras was in a sense a duplicate of his handsome son Adonis, to whom the inflammable goddess also lost her heart. Further, these stories of the love of Aphrodite for two members of the royal house of Paphos can hardly be dissociated from the corresponding legend told of Pygmalion, the Phoenician king of Cyprus, who is said to have fallen in love with an image of Aphrodite and taken it to his bed.<sup>4</sup> When we consider that Pygmalion was the father-in-law of Cinyras, that the son of Cinyras was Adonis, and that all three, in successive generations, are said to have been concerned in a love-intrigue with Aphrodite, we can hardly help concluding that the early Phoenician kings of Paphos, or their sons, regularly claimed to be not merely the priests of the goddess<sup>5</sup> but also her lovers, in other words, that in their official capacity they personated Adonis. At all events Adonis is said to have reigned in Cyprus,<sup>6</sup> and it appears to be certain that the title of Adonis was regularly borne by the sons of all the Phoenician kings of the island.<sup>7</sup> It is

Pygmalion  
and  
Aphrodite.

The  
Phoenician  
kings of  
Cyprus or  
their sons  
appear to  
have been  
hereditary  
lovers  
of the  
goddess.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *Rhetorum praeceptor*, 11; Hyginus, *Fab.* 270.

<sup>2</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 33, p. 29, ed. Potter.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, ii. 585, 612; A. Maury, *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce Antique*, iii. 197, n. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vi. 22; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* iv. 57, p. 51, ed. Potter; Ovid, *Métam.* x. 243-297. The authority for the story is the Greek history of Cyprus by Philostephanus, cited both by Arnobius and Clement. In Ovid's poetical version of the legend Pygmalion is a sculptor, and the image with which he falls in love is that of a lovely woman, which at his prayer Venus endows with life. That King Pygmalion was a

Phoenician is mentioned by Porphyry (*De abstinentia*, iv. 15) on the authority of Asclepiades, a Cyprian.

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 37 *sq.*

<sup>6</sup> Probus, on Virgil, *Ecl.* x. 18. I owe this reference to Mr. A. B. Cook.

<sup>7</sup> In his treatise on the political institutions of Cyprus, Aristotle reported that the sons and brothers of the kings were called "lords" (*δυναστες*), and their sisters and wives "ladies" (*δυνασσαι*). See Harpocration and Suidas, s.v. *Δυναστες*. Compare Isocrates, ix. 72; Clearchus of Soli, quoted by Athenaeus, vi. 68, p. 256 A. Now in the bilingual inscription of Idalion, which furnished the clue to the Cypriote syllabary, the Greek version gives the title *ἡγεμῶν* as the equivalent of the



true that the title strictly signified no more than "lord"; yet the legends which connect these Cyprian princes with the goddess of love make it probable that they claimed the divine nature as well as the human dignity of Adonis. The story of Pygmalion points to a ceremony of a sacred marriage in which the king wedded the image of Aphrodite, or rather of Astarte. If that was so, the tale was in a sense true, not of a single man only, but of a whole series of men, and it would be all the more likely to be told of Pygmalion, if that was a common name of Semitic kings in general, and of Cyprian kings in particular. Pygmalion, at all events, is known as the name of the famous king of Tyre from whom his sister Dido fled;<sup>1</sup> and a king of Citium and Idalium in Cyprus, who reigned in the time of Alexander the Great, was also called Pygmalion, or rather Pumi-yathon, the Phoenician name which the Greeks corrupted into Pygmalion.<sup>2</sup> Further, it deserves to be noted that the names Pygmalion and Astarte occur together in a Punic inscription on a gold medallion which was found in a grave at Carthage; the characters of the inscription are of the earliest type.<sup>3</sup> As the custom of religious prostitution at Paphos is said to have been founded by King Cinyras and observed by his daughters,<sup>4</sup> we may surmise that the kings of Paphos played the part of the divine bridegroom in a less innocent rite than the form of marriage with a statue; in

Sacred  
marriage  
of the  
kings of  
Paphos.

Phoenician *Adon* (אדון). See *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, i. No. 89; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 74, n. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, i. 18, ed. B. Niese; Applan, *Punica*, 1; Virgil, *Aen.* i. 346 sq.; Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 574; Justin, xviii. 4; Eustathius on Dionysius Periegetes, 195 (*Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 250 sq.).

<sup>2</sup> Pumi-yathon, son of Milk-yathon, is known from Phoenician inscriptions found at Idalium. See G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Nos. 12 and 13, pp. 55 sq., 57 sq. Coins inscribed with the name of King Pumi-yathon are also in existence. See G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek*

*Coins of Cyprus* (London, 1904), pp. xl. sq., 21 sq., pl. iv. 20-24. He was deposed by Ptolemy (Diodorus Siculus, xix. 79. 4). Most probably he is the Pymaton of Citium who purchased the kingdom from a dissolute monarch named Pasicyprus some time before the conquests of Alexander (Athenaeus, iv. 63, p. 167). In this passage of Athenaeus the name Pymaton, which is found in the MSS. and agrees closely with the Phoenician Pumi-yathon, ought not to be changed into Pygmalion, as the latest editor (G. Kaibel) has done.

<sup>3</sup> G. A. Cooke, *op. cit.* p. 55, n. 1. Mr. Cooke remarks that the form of the name (𐤏𐤓𐤌𐤍 instead of 𐤏𐤓𐤌𐤍) must be due to Greek influence.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 36.



fact, that at certain festivals each of them had to mate with one or more of the sacred harlots of the temple, who played Astarte to his Adonis. If that was so, there is more truth than has commonly been supposed in the reproach cast by the Christian fathers that the Aphrodite worshipped by Cinyras was a common whore.<sup>1</sup> The fruit of their union would rank as sons and daughters of the deity, and would in time become the parents of gods and goddesses, like their fathers and mothers before them. In this manner Paphos, and perhaps all sanctuaries of the great Asiatic goddess where sacred prostitution was practised, might be well stocked with human deities, the offspring of the divine king by his wives, concubines, and temple harlots. Any one of these might probably succeed his father on the throne<sup>2</sup> or be sacrificed in his stead whenever stress of war or other grave junctures called, as they sometimes did,<sup>3</sup> for the death of a royal victim. Such a tax, levied occasionally on the king's numerous progeny for the good of the country, would neither extinguish the divine stock nor break the father's heart, who divided his paternal affection among so many. At all events, if, as there seems reason to believe, Semitic kings were often regarded at the same time as hereditary deities, it is easy to understand the frequency of Semitic personal names which imply that the bearers of them were the sons or daughters, the brothers or sisters, the fathers or mothers of a god, and we need not resort to the shifts employed by some scholars to evade the plain sense of the words.<sup>4</sup> This interpretation is confirmed by a parallel

Sons and daughters, fathers and mothers of a god.

<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 13, p. 12; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 9; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 10.

<sup>2</sup> That the king was not necessarily succeeded by his eldest son is proved by the case of Solomon, who on his accession executed his elder brother Adoni-jah (1 Kings ii. 22-24). Similarly, when Abimelech became king of Shechem, he put his seventy brothers in ruthless oriental fashion to death. See Judges viii. 29-31, ix. 5 sq., 18. So on his accession Jehoram, King of Judah, put all his brothers to the sword (2 Chronicles xxi. 4). King Rehoboam

had eighty-eight children (2 Chronicles xi. 21) and King Abi-jah had thirty-eight (2 Chronicles xiii. 21). These examples illustrate the possible size of the family of a polygamous king.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 34 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> The names which imply that a man was the father of a god have proved particularly puzzling to some eminent Semitic scholars. See W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> p. 45, n. 2; Th. Nöldeke, *s.v.* "Names," *Encyclopædia Biblica*, iii. 3287 sqq. Such names are Abi-baal ("father of Baal"), Abi-el ("father of El"), Abi-jah ("father of Jehovah"),

Egyptian usage; for in Egypt, where the kings were worshipped as divine,<sup>1</sup> the queen was called "the wife of the god" or "the mother of the god,"<sup>2</sup> and the title "father of the god" was borne not only by the king's real father but also by his father-in-law.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, perhaps, among the Semites any man who sent his daughter to swell the royal harem may have been allowed to call himself "the father of the god."

If we may judge by his name, the Semitic king who bore the name of Cinyras was, like King David, a harper; for the name of Cinyras is clearly connected with the Greek *cinyra*, "a lyre," which in its turn comes from the Semitic *kinnor*, "a lyre," the very word applied to the instrument on which David played before Saul.<sup>4</sup> We shall probably not err in assuming that at Paphos as at Jerusalem the music of the lyre or harp was not a mere pastime designed to while away an idle hour, but formed part of the service of religion, the moving influence of its melodies being perhaps set down, like the effect of wine, to the direct inspiration of a deity. Certainly at Jerusalem the regular clergy of the temple prophesied to the music of harps, of psalteries, and of cymbals;<sup>5</sup> and it appears that the irregular clergy also, as we may call the prophets, depended on some such stimulus for inducing the ecstatic state which they took for immediate converse with the divinity.<sup>6</sup> Thus we read of a band of prophets coming down from a high place with a psaltery, a timbrel, a pipe, and a harp before them, and

Cinyras,  
like King  
David, a  
harper.

The use of  
music as a  
means of  
prophetic  
inspiration  
among the  
Hebrews.

and Abi-melech ("father of a king" or "father of Moloch"). On the hypothesis put forward in the text the father of a god and the son of a god stood precisely on the same footing, and the same person would often be both one and the other. Where the common practice prevailed of naming a father after his son (*The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> l. 412 sq.), a divine king in later life might often be called "father of such-and-such a god."

<sup>1</sup> See my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 148 sq.

<sup>2</sup> A. Erman, *Ägypten und Ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> L. Borchardt, "Der ägyptische

Titel 'Vater des Gottes' als Bezeichnung für 'Vater oder Schwiegervater des Königs,'" *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich-Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaft zu Leipzig*, Philolog. Histor. Klasse, lvii. (1905) pp. 254-270.

<sup>4</sup> F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 243; Stoll, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexicon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, i. 1191; 1 Samuel xvi. 23.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Chronicles xxv. 1-3; compare 2 Samuel vi. 5.

<sup>6</sup> W. Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 391 sq.; E. Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israel*, ii. 280.



prophesying as they went.<sup>1</sup> Again, when the united forces of Judah and Ephraim were traversing the wilderness of Moab in pursuit of the enemy, they could find no water for three days, and were like to die of thirst, they and the beasts of burden. In this emergency the prophet Elisha, who was with the army, called for a minstrel and bade him play. Under the influence of the music he ordered the soldiers to dig trenches in the sandy bed of the waterless waddy through which lay the line of march. They did so, and next morning the trenches were full of the water that had drained down into them underground from the desolate, forbidding mountains on either hand. The prophet's success in striking water in the wilderness resembles the reported success of modern dowsers, though his mode of procedure was different. Incidentally he rendered another service to his countrymen. For the skulking Moabites from their lairs among the rocks saw the red sun of the desert reflected in the water, and taking it for the blood, or perhaps rather for an omen of the blood, of their enemies, they plucked up heart to attack the camp and were defeated with great slaughter.<sup>2</sup>

The  
influence  
of music  
on religion.

Again, just as the cloud of melancholy which from time to time darkened the moody mind of Saul was viewed as an evil spirit from the Lord vexing him, so on the other hand the solemn strains of the harp, which soothed and composed his troubled thoughts,<sup>3</sup> may well have seemed to the hag-ridden king the very voice of God or of his good angel whispering peace. Even in our own day a great religious writer, himself deeply sensitive to the witchery of music, has said that musical notes, with all their power to fire the blood and melt the heart, cannot be mere empty sounds and nothing more; no, they have escaped from some higher sphere, they are outpourings of eternal harmony, the voice of angels, the Magnificat of saints.<sup>4</sup> It is thus that the rude imaginings of primitive man are transfigured and his feeble lisps

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel x. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings iii. 4-24. And for the explanation of the supposed miracle, see W. Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 146, 57. I have to thank Professor Kennett for the suggestion that the

Moabites took the ruddy light on the water for an omen of blood rather than for actual gore.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Samuel xvi. 14-23.

<sup>4</sup> J. H. Newman, *Sermons preached before the University of Oxford*, No. xv. pp. 346 sq. (third edition).



echoed with a rolling reverberation in the musical prose of Newman. Indeed the influence of music on the development of religion is a subject which would repay a sympathetic study. For we cannot doubt that this, the most intimate and affecting of all the arts, has done much to create as well as to express the religious emotions, thus modifying more or less deeply the fabric of belief to which at first sight it seems only to minister. The musician has done his part as well as the prophet and the thinker in the making of religion. Every faith has its appropriate music, and the difference between the creeds might almost be expressed in musical notation. The interval, for example, which divides the wild revels of Cybele from the stately ritual of the Catholic Church is measured by the gulf which severs the dissonant clash of cymbals and tambourines from the grave harmonies of Palestrina and Handel. A different spirit breathes in the difference of the music.<sup>1</sup>

The legend which made Apollo a friend of Cinyras<sup>2</sup> may be based on a belief in their common devotion to the lyre. But what function, we may ask, did string music perform in the Greek and the Semitic ritual? Did it serve to rouse the human mouthpiece of the god to prophetic ecstasy? or did it merely ban goblins and demons from the holy places and the holy service, drawing as it were around the worshippers a magic circle within which no evil thing might intrude? In short, did it aim at summoning good or banishing evil spirits? was its object inspiration or exorcism? The examples drawn from the lives or legends of Elisha and David prove that with the Hebrews the music of the lyre might be used for either purpose; for while Elisha employed it to tune himself to the prophetic pitch, David resorted to it for the sake of exorcising the foul fiend from Saul. With the Greeks, on the other hand, in historical times, it does not appear that string music served as a means of inducing the condition of trance or ecstasy in the human mouthpieces of Apollo and the other oracular gods; on the contrary, its sobering and composing influence, as contrasted with the exciting

The function of string music in Greek and Semitic ritual.

<sup>1</sup> It would be interesting to pursue a similar line of inquiry in regard to the other arts. What was the influence of Phidias on Greek religion? How

much does Catholicism owe to Fra Angelico?

<sup>2</sup> Pindar, *Pyth.* ii. 15 sq.

influence of flute music, is the aspect which chiefly impressed the Greek mind.<sup>1</sup> The religious or, at all events, the superstitious man might naturally ascribe the mental composure wrought by grave, sweet music to a riddance of evil spirits, in short to exorcism; and in harmony with this view, Pindar, speaking of the lyre, says that all things hateful to Zeus in earth and sea tremble at the sound of music.<sup>2</sup> Yet the association of the lyre with the legendary prophet Orpheus as well as with the oracular god Apollo seems to hint that in early days its strains may have been employed by the Greeks, as they certainly were by the Hebrews, to bring on that state of mental exaltation in which the thick-coming fancies of the visionary are regarded as divine communications.<sup>3</sup> Which of these two functions of music, the positive or the negative, the inspiring or the protective, predominated in the religion of Adonis we cannot say; perhaps the two were not clearly distinguished in the minds of his worshippers.

Traditions  
as to the  
death of  
Cinyras.

A constant feature in the myth of Adonis was his premature and violent death. If, then, the kings of Paphos regularly personated Adonis, we must ask whether they imitated their divine prototype in death as in life. Tradition varied as to the end of Cinyras. Some thought that he slew himself on discovering his incest with his daughter;<sup>4</sup> others alleged that, like Marsyas, he was defeated by Apollo in a musical contest and put to death by the victor.<sup>5</sup> Yet he cannot strictly be said to have perished in the flower of his youth if he lived, as Anacreon averred, to the ripe age of one hundred and sixty.<sup>6</sup> If we must choose between the two stories, it is perhaps more likely that he died a violent death

<sup>1</sup> On the lyre and the flute in Greek religion and Greek thought, see L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, iv. 243 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Pindar, *Pyth.* i. 13 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> This seems to be the view also of Dr. Farnell, who rightly connects the musical with the prophetic side of Apollo's character (*op. cit.* iv. 245).

<sup>4</sup> Hyginus, *Fab.* 242. So in the version of the story which made Adonis the son of Theias, the father is said to

have killed himself when he learned what he had done (Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 34).

<sup>5</sup> Scholiast and Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, xi. 20. Compare F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenisier*, i. 243 *sq.*; W. H. Engel, *Kypros*, ii. 109-116; Stoll, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1191.

<sup>6</sup> Anacreon, cited by Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 154. Nonnus also refers to the long life of Cinyras (*Dionys.* xxxii. 212 *sq.*).

than that he survived to an age which surpassed that of Thomas Parr by eight years,<sup>1</sup> though it fell far short of the antediluvian standard. The life of eminent men in remote ages is exceedingly elastic and may be lengthened or shortened, in the interests of history, at the taste and fancy of the historian.

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*,<sup>9</sup> xiv. 858.



## CHAPTER IV

### SACRED MEN AND WOMEN

#### § 1. *An Alternative Theory*

Sacred  
prostitution  
of  
Western  
Asia.

IN the preceding chapter we saw that a system of sacred prostitution was regularly carried on all over Western Asia, and that both in Phoenicia and in Cyprus the practice was specially associated with the worship of Adonis. As the explanation which I have adopted of the custom has been rejected in favour of another by writers whose opinions are entitled to be treated with respect, I shall devote the present chapter to a further consideration of the subject, and shall attempt to gather, from a closer scrutiny and a wider survey of the field, such evidence as may set the custom and with it the worship of Adonis in a clearer light. At the outset it will be well to examine the alternative theory which has been put forward to explain the facts.

Theory of  
its secular  
origin.

It has been proposed to derive the religious prostitution of Western Asia from a purely secular and precautionary practice of destroying a bride's virginity before handing her over to her husband in order that "the bridegroom's intercourse should be safe from a peril that is much dreaded by men in a certain stage of culture."<sup>1</sup> Among

<sup>1</sup> L. R. Farnell, "Sociological hypotheses concerning the position of women in ancient religion," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, vii. (1904) p. 88; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipsic, 1906), pp. 366-19.; Fr. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme Romain* (Paris, 1907), pp. 286-288. A different

and, in my judgment, a truer view of these customs was formerly taken by Prof. Nilsson. See his *Studii de Dionysii Attici* (Lund, 1900), pp. 119-121. For a large collection of facts bearing on this subject and a judicious discussion of them, see W. Hertz, "Die Sage vom Giftmädchen," *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*

the objections which may be taken to this view are the following:—

(1) The theory fails to account for the deeply religious character of the customs as practised in antiquity all over Western Asia. That religious character appears from the observance of the custom at the sanctuaries of a great goddess, the dedication of the wages of prostitution to her, the belief of the women that they earned her favour by prostituting themselves,<sup>1</sup> and the command of a male deity to serve him in this manner.<sup>2</sup>

The theory does not account for the religious character of the custom.

(2) The theory fails to account for the prostitution of married women at Heliopolis<sup>3</sup> and apparently also at Babylon and Byblus; for in describing the practice at the two latter places our authorities, Herodotus and Lucian, speak only of women, not of virgins.<sup>4</sup> In Israel also we know from Hosea that young married women prostituted themselves at the sanctuaries on the hilltops under the shadow of the sacred oaks, poplars, and terebinths.<sup>5</sup> The prophet makes no mention of virgins participating in these orgies. They may have done so, but his language does not imply it: he speaks only of "your daughters" and "your daughters-in-law." The prostitution of married women is wholly inexplicable on the hypothesis here criticised. Yet it can hardly be separated from the prostitution of virgins, which in some places at least was carried on side by side with it.

nor for the prostitution of married women.

(3) The theory fails to account for the repeated and professional prostitution of women in Lydia, Cappadocia, Armenia, and apparently all over Palestine.<sup>6</sup> Yet this

nor for the repeated prostitution of the same women.

(Stuttgart and Berlin, 1905), pp. 195-219. My attention was drawn to this last work by Prof. G. L. Hamilton of the University of Michigan after my manuscript had been sent to the printer. With Hertz's treatment of the subject I am in general agreement, and I have derived from his learned treatise several references to authorities which I had overlooked.

<sup>1</sup> Above, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 34. Prof. Nilsson is mistaken in affirming (*op. cit.* p. 367) that the Lydian practice was purely

secular: the inscription which I have cited proves the contrary. Both he and Dr. Farnell fully recognise the religious aspect of most of these customs in antiquity, and Prof. Nilsson attempts, as it seems to me, unsuccessfully, to indicate how a practice supposed to be purely secular in origin should have come to contract a religious character.

<sup>3</sup> Above, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Above, pp. 32, 33.

<sup>5</sup> Hosea iv. 13 *sq.*

<sup>6</sup> Above, pp. 34, 36, note 2.



habitual prostitution can in its turn hardly be separated from the first prostitution in a woman's life. Or are we to suppose that the first act of unchastity is to be explained in one way and all the subsequent acts in quite another? that the first act was purely secular and all the subsequent acts purely religious?

nor for the  
"sacred  
men" be-  
side the  
"sacred  
women."

(4) The theory fails to account for the *Kedeshim* ("sacred men") side by side with the *Kedeshoth* ("sacred women") at the sanctuaries;<sup>1</sup> for whatever the religious functions of these "sacred men" may have been, it is highly probable that they were analogous to those of the "sacred women" and are to be explained in the same way.

and is irre-  
concilable  
with the  
payment  
of the  
women.

(5) On the hypothesis which I am considering we should expect to find the man who deflowers the maid remunerated for rendering a dangerous service; and so in fact we commonly find him remunerated in places where the supposed custom is really practised.<sup>2</sup> But in Western Asia it was just the contrary. It was the woman who was paid, not the man; indeed, so well was she paid that in Lydia and Cyprus the girls earned dowries for themselves in this fashion.<sup>3</sup> This clearly shows that it was the woman, and not the man, who was believed to render the service. Or are we to suppose that the man had to pay for rendering a dangerous service?<sup>4</sup>

These considerations seem to prove conclusively that whatever the remote origin of these Western Asiatic customs

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 14-19.

<sup>2</sup> L. di Vantema, *Travels* (Hakluyt Society, 1863), pp. 141, 202-204 (Malabar); J. A. de Mandlesloc, in J. Harris's *Voyages and Travels*, i. (London, 1744), p. 767 (Malabar); Richard, "History of Tonquin," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, ix. 760 sq. (Aracan); A. de Morga, *The Philippine Islands, Moluccas, Siam, Cambodia, Japan, and China* (Hakluyt Society, 1868), pp. 304 sq. (the Philippines); J. Mallat, *Les Philippines* (Paris, 1846), i. 61 (the Philippines); L. Moncelon, in *Bulletins de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, 3me Série, ix. (1886) p. 368 (New Caledonia); H. Crawford Angus, in *Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesell-*

*schaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, 1898, p. 481 (Azimba, Central Africa); Sir H. Johnston, *British Central Africa* (London, 1897), p. 410 (the Wa-Yao of Central Africa). See further, W. Hertz, "Die Sage vom Giftmädchen," *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, pp. 198-204.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, i. 93; Justin, xviii. 5. 4. Part of the wages thus earned was probably paid into the local temple. See above, pp. 32, 33.

<sup>4</sup> This fatal objection to the theory under discussion has been clearly stated by W. Hertz, *op. cit.* p. 217. I am glad to find myself in agreement with so judicious and learned an enquirer.



may have been, they cannot have been observed in historical times from any such motive as is assumed by the hypothesis under discussion. At the period when we have to do with them the customs were to all appearance purely religious in character, and a religious motive must accordingly be found for them. Such a motive is supplied by the theory I have adopted, which, so far as I can judge, adequately explains all the known facts.

At the same time, in justice to the writers whose views I have criticised, I wish to point out that the practice from which they propose to derive the sacred prostitution of Western Asia has not always been purely secular in character. For, in the first place, the agent employed is sometimes reported to be a priest;<sup>1</sup> and, in the second place, the sacrifice of virginity has in some places, for example at Rome and in parts of India, been made directly to the image of a male deity.<sup>2</sup> The meaning of these practices is very obscure, and in the present state of our ignorance on the subject it is unsafe to build conclusions on them. It is possible that what seems to be a purely secular precaution may be only a degenerate form of a religious rite; and on the other hand it is possible that the religious rite may go back to a purely physical preparation for marriage, such as is still observed among the aborigines of Australia.<sup>3</sup> But even if such an

The practice of destroying virginity has sometimes had a religious character.

<sup>1</sup> L. di Varthema, *Travels* (Hakluyt Society, 1863), p. 141; J. A. de Mandlesloe, in J. Harris's *Voyages and Travels*, i. (London, 1744), p. 767; A. Hamilton, "New Account of the East Indies," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, viii. 374; Ch. Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, iv. 408; A. de Herrera, *The General History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America* (translated by Captain J. Stevens), lii. 310, 340; Fr. Coreal, *Voyages aux Indes Occidentales* (Amsterdam, 1722), i. 10 sq., 139 sq.; C. F. Ph. v. Martius, *Beiträge zur Ethnographie und Sprachenkunde Amerika's*, i. 113 sq. The first three of these authorities refer to Malabar; the fourth refers to Cambodia; the last three refer to the Indians of Central and South America. See further, W. Hertz, "Die Sage vom Giftmädchen,"

*Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, pp. 204-207. For a criticism of the Malabar evidence see K. Schmidt, *Jus primæ noctis* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1881), pp. 312-320.

<sup>2</sup> Lactantius, *Divin. Institut.* i. 20; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, iv. 7; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vi. 9, vii. 24; D. Barbosa, *Description of the coasts of East Africa and Malabar* (Hakluyt Society, 1866), p. 96; Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine* (Paris, 1782), i. 68; F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, pp. 396 sq., 511; W. Hertz, "Die Sage vom Giftmädchen," *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, pp. 270-272. According to Arnobius, it was matrons, not maidens, who resorted to the image. This suggests that the custom was a charm to procure offspring.

<sup>3</sup> R. Schomburgk, in *Verhandlungen*

historical origin could be established, it would not explain the motives from which the customs described in this volume were practised by the people of Western Asia in historical times. The true parallel to these customs is the sacred prostitution which is carried on to this day by dedicated women in India and Africa. An examination of these modern practices may throw light on the ancient customs.

## § 2. *Sacred Women in India*

Sacred women in the Tamil temples of Southern India.

In India the dancing-girls dedicated to the service of the Tamil temples take the name of *deva-dasis*, "servants or slaves of the gods," but in common parlance they are spoken of simply as harlots. Every Tamil temple of note in Southern India has its troop of these sacred women. Their official duties are to dance twice a day, morning and evening, in the temple, to fan the idol with Tibetan ox-tails, to dance and sing before it when it is borne in procession, and to carry the holy light called *Kumbarti*. Inscriptions show that in 1004 A.D. the great temple of the Chola King Rajaraja at Tanjore had attached to it four hundred "women of the temple," who lived at free quarters in the streets round about it and were allowed land free of taxes out of its endowment. From infancy they are trained to dance and sing. In order to obtain a safe delivery expectant mothers will often vow to dedicate their child, if she should prove to be a girl, to the service of God. Among the weavers of Tiru-kalli-kundram, a little town in the Madras Presidency, the eldest daughter of every family is devoted to the temple. Girls thus made over to the deity are formally married, sometimes to the idol, sometimes to a sword, before they enter on their duties; from which it appears that they are often, if not regularly, regarded as the wives of the god.<sup>1</sup>

Such women are sometimes married to the god and possessed by him.

*der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, 1879, pp. 235 sq.; Miklucho-Maclay, *ibid.* 1880, p. 89; W. E. Roth, *Studies among the North-west-central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane and London, 1897), pp. 174 sq., 180; B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 92-

95; *id.*, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 133-136. In Australia the observance of the custom is regularly followed by the exercise of what seem to be old communal rights of the men over the women.

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Dubois, *Moeurs, Institutions et Cérémonies des Peuples de l'Inde*, ii. 353 sqq.; J. Shortt, "The



In Mahratta such a female devotee is called Murli. Common folk believe that from time to time the shadow of the god falls on her and possesses her person. At such times the possessed woman rocks herself to and fro, and the people occasionally consult her as a soothsayer, laying money at her feet and accepting as an oracle the words of wisdom or folly that drop from her lips.<sup>1</sup> Nor is the profession of a temple prostitute adopted only by girls. In Tulava, a district of Southern India, any woman of the four highest castes who wearies of her husband or, as a widow and therefore incapable of marriage, grows tired of celibacy, may go to a temple and eat of the rice offered to the idol. Thereupon, if she is a Brahman, she has the right to live either in the temple or outside of its precincts, as she pleases. If she decides to live in it, she gets a daily allowance of rice, and must sweep the temple, fan the idol, and confine her amours to the Brahmans. The male children of these women form a special class called Moylar, but are fond of assuming the title of Stanikas. As many of them as can find employment hang about the temple, sweeping the areas, sprinkling them with cow-dung, carrying torches before the gods, and performing other menial offices. Some of them, debarred from these holy offices, are reduced to the painful necessity of earning their bread by honest work. The daughters are either brought up to live like their mothers or are given in marriage to the Stanikas. Brahman women who do not choose to live in the temples, and all the women of the three lower castes, cohabit with any man of pure descent, but they have to pay a fixed sum annually to the temple.<sup>2</sup>

In Travancore a dancing-girl attached to a temple is known as a *Dâsi*, or *Dêvaddâsi*, or *Dêvaratidâr*, "a servant of God." The following account of her dedication and way of life deserves to be quoted because, while it ignores the baser

In Travancore the dancing-girls are regularly married to the god.

Bayadère or dancing-girls of Southern India," *Memoirs of the Anthropological Society of London*, iii. (1867-69) pp. 182-194; E. Balfour, *Cyclopaedia of India*,<sup>3</sup> i. 922 sqq.; W. Francis, in *Census of India*, 1901, vol. xv. (Madras), Part I. pp. 151 sq.; E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in*

*Southern India* (Madras, 1906), pp. 36 sq., 40 sq.

<sup>1</sup> E. Balfour, *op. cit.* ii. 1012.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Buchanan, "A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar," Finkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, viii. 749.



Sacred  
dancing-  
girls  
married to  
the god in  
Travan-  
core.

side of her vocation, it brings clearly out the idea of her marriage to the deity. "Marriage in the case of a *Dēvaratīdī* in its original import is a renunciation of ordinary family life and a consecration to the service of God. With a lady-nurse at a Hospital, or a sister at a Convent, a *Dēvadāsi* at a Hindu shrine, such as she probably was in the early ages of Hindu spirituality, would have claimed favourable comparison. In the ceremonial of the dedication-marriage of the *Dāsi*, elements are not wanting which indicate a past quite the reverse of disreputable. The girl to be married is generally from six to eight years in age. The bridegroom is the presiding deity of the local temple. The ceremony is done at his house. The expenses of the celebration are supposed to be partly paid from his funds. To instance the practice at the Suchindram temple, a *Yāga* or meeting of the chief functionaries of the temple arranges the preliminaries. The girl to be wedded bathes and goes to the temple with two pieces of cloth, a *tālī*, betel, areca-nut, etc. These are placed by the priest at the feet of the image. The girl sits with the face towards the deity. The priest kindles the sacred fire and goes through all the rituals of the *Tirukkalyānam* festival. He then initiates the bride into the *Panchākshara mantra*, if in a Saiva temple and the *Ashtākshara*, if in a Vaishnava temple. On behalf of the divine bridegroom, he presents one of the two cloths she has brought as offering and ties the *Tālī* around her neck. The practice, how old it is not possible to say, is then to take her to her house where the usual marriage festivities are celebrated for four days. As in Brahminical marriages, the *Nalunku* ceremony, i.e. the rolling of a cocoanut by the bride to the bridegroom and *vice versa* a number of times to the accompaniment of music, is gone through, the temple priest playing the bridegroom's part. Thenceforth she becomes the wife of the deity in the sense that she formally and solemnly dedicates the rest of her life to his service with the same constancy and devotion that a faithful wife united in holy matrimony shows to her wedded lord. The life of a *Dēvadāsi* bedecked with all the accomplishments that the muses could give was one of spotless purity. Even now she is maintained by the temple. She undertakes fasts in connection with the temple

festivals, such as the seven days' fast for the *Apamārgam* ceremony. During the period of this fast, strict continence is enjoined; she is required to take only one meal, and that within the temple—in fact to live and behave at least for a term, in the manner ordained for her throughout life. Some of the details of her daily work seem interesting; she attends the *Dīpāradhana*, the waving of lighted lamps in front of the deity at sunset every day; sings hymns in his praise, dances before his presence, goes round with him in his processions with lights in hand. After the procession, she sings a song or two from Jaydēva's *Gitagōvinda* and with a few lullaby hymns, her work for the night is over. When she grows physically unfit for these duties, she is formally invalided by a special ceremony, i.e. *Tōtuvaikkuka*, or the laying down of the ear-pendants. It is gone through at the Maha Raja's palace, whereafter she becomes a *Tāikkishavi* (old mother), entitled only to a subsistence-allowance. When she dies, the temple contributes to the funeral expenses. On her death-bed, the priest attends and after a few ceremonies immediately after death, gets her bathed with saffron-powder."<sup>1</sup>

### § 3. *Sacred Men and Women in West Africa*

Still more instructive for our present purpose are the West African customs. Among the Ewe-speaking peoples of the Slave coast "recruits for the priesthood are obtained in two ways, viz., by the affiliation of young persons, and by the direct consecration of adults. Young people of either sex dedicated or affiliated to a god are termed *kosio*, from *kono*, 'unfruitful,' because a child dedicated to a god passes into his service and is practically lost to his parents, and *si*, 'to run away.' As the females become the 'wives' of the god to whom they are dedicated, the termination *si* in *vōdu-si* [another name for these dedicated women], has been translated 'wife' by some Europeans; but it is never used in the general acceptance of that term, being entirely restricted to persons consecrated to the gods. The chief business of

Among the Ewe peoples of West Africa the sacred prostitutes are regarded as the wives of the god.

<sup>1</sup> N. Subramhanya Aiyar, in *Census of India*, 1901, vol. xxvi. (Travancore), pp. 276 sq. I have to thank my friend

Mr. W. Crooke for referring me to this and other passages on the sacred dancing-girls of India.



the female *kosi* is prostitution, and in every town there is at least one institution in which the best-looking girls, between ten and twelve years of age, are received. Here they remain for three years, learning the chants and dances peculiar to the worship of the gods, and prostituting themselves to the priests and the inmates of the male seminaries; and at the termination of their novitiate they become public prostitutes. This condition, however, is not regarded as one for reproach; they are considered to be married to the god, and their excesses are supposed to be caused and directed by him. Properly speaking, their libertinage should be confined to the male worshippers at the temple of the god, but practically it is indiscriminate. Children who are born from such unions belong to the god."<sup>1</sup> These women are not allowed to marry since they are deemed the wives of a god.<sup>2</sup>

The  
human  
wives of  
the python-  
god.

Again, in this part of Africa "the female *Kosio* of Dañh-gbi, or *Dañh-sio*, that is, the wives, priestesses, and temple prostitutes of Dañh-gbi, the python-god, have their own organisation. Generally they live together in a group of houses or huts inclosed by a fence, and in these enclosures the novices undergo their three years of initiation. Most new members are obtained by the affiliation of young girls; but any woman whatever, married or single, slave or free, by publicly simulating possession, and uttering the conventional cries recognised as indicative of possession by the god, can at once join the body, and be admitted to the habitations of the order. The person of a woman who has joined in this manner is inviolable, and during the period of her novitiate she is forbidden, if single, to enter the house of her parents, and, if married, that of her husband. This inviolability, while it gives women opportunities of gratifying an illicit passion, at the same time serves occasionally to save the persecuted slave, or neglected wife, from the ill-treatment of the lord and master; for she has only to go through the conventional form of possession and an asylum is assured."<sup>3</sup> The python-god marries these women secretly

<sup>1</sup> A. R. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave-coast of West Africa*, pp. 140 sq.

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Ellis, *op. cit.* p. 142.

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Ellis, *op. cit.* pp. 148 sq. Compare Des Marchais, *Voyage en Guinée et à Cayenne* (Amsterdam, 1731), ii. 144-151; P. Bouche, *La*



in his temple, and they father their offspring on him ; but it is the priests who consummate the union.<sup>1</sup>

For our purpose it is important to note that a close connection is apparently supposed to exist between the fertility of the soil and the marriage of these women to the serpent. For the time when new brides are sought for the reptile-god is the season when the millet is beginning to sprout. Then the old priestesses, armed with clubs, run frantically through the streets shrieking like mad women and carrying off to be brides of the serpent any little girls between the ages of eight and twelve whom they may find outside of the houses. Pious people at such times will sometimes leave their daughters at their doors on purpose that they may have the honour of being dedicated to the god.<sup>2</sup> The marriage of wives to the serpent-god is probably deemed necessary to enable him to discharge the important function of making the crops to grow and the cattle to multiply ; for we read that these people "invoke the snake in excessively wet, dry, or barren seasons ; on all occasions relating to their government and the preservation of their cattle ; or rather, in one word, in all necessities and difficulties, in which they do not apply to their new batch of gods."<sup>3</sup> Once in a bad season the Dutch factor Bosman found the King of Whydah in a great rage. His Majesty explained the reason of his discomposure by saying "that that year he had sent much larger offerings to the snake-house than usual, in order to obtain a good crop ; and that one of his vice-roys (whom he showed me) had desired him afresh, in the name of the priests, who threatened a barren year, to send yet more. To which he answered that he did not intend to make any further offerings this year ; and if the snake would not bestow a plentiful harvest on them, he might let it alone ; for (said he) I cannot be more damaged thereby, the greatest part of my corn being already rotten in the field."<sup>4</sup>

*Côte des Esclaves* (Paris, 1885), p. 128. The Abbé Bouche calls these women *darrwds*.

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Ellis, *op. cit.* p. 60 ; Des Marchais, *op. cit.* ii. 149 *sq.*

<sup>2</sup> Des Marchais, *Voyage en Guinée et à Cayenne* (Amsterdam, 1731), ii.

146 *sq.*

<sup>3</sup> W. Bosman, "Description of the Coast of Guinea," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 494.

<sup>4</sup> W. Bosman, *l.c.* The name of Whydah is spelt by Bosman as Fida, and by Des Marchais as Juda.

Sacred  
men as  
well as  
women in  
West  
Africa :  
they are  
thought  
to be  
possessed  
by the  
deity.

Among the negroes of the Slave Coast there are, as we have seen, male *kosio* as well as female *kosio* ; that is, there are dedicated men as well as dedicated women, priests as well as priestesses, and the ideas and customs in regard to them seem to be similar. Like the women, the men undergo a three years' novitiate, at the end of which each candidate has to prove that the god accepts him and finds him worthy of inspiration. Escorted by a party of priests he goes to a shrine and seats himself on a stool that belongs to the deity. The priests then anoint his head with a mystic decoction and invoke the god in a long and wild chorus. During the singing the youth, if he is acceptable to the deity, trembles violently, simulates convulsions, foams at the mouth, and dances in a frenzied style, sometimes for more than an hour. This is the proof that the god has taken possession of him. After that he has to remain in a temple without speaking for seven days and nights. At the end of that time, he is brought out, a priest opens his mouth to show that he may now use his tongue, a new name is given him, and he is fully ordained.<sup>1</sup> Henceforth he is regarded as the priest and medium of the deity whom he serves, and the words which he utters in that morbid state of mental excitement which passes for divine inspiration, are accepted by the hearers as the very words of the god spoken by the mouth of the man.<sup>2</sup> Any crime which a priest committed in a state of frenzy used to remain unpunished, no doubt because the act was thought to be the act of the god. But this benefit of clergy was so much abused that under King Gezo the law had to be altered ; and although, while he is still possessed by the god, the inspired criminal is safe, he is now liable to punishment as soon as the divine spirit leaves him. Nevertheless on the whole among these people "the person of a priest or priestess is sacred. Not only must a layman not lay hands on or insult one ; he must be careful not even to knock one by accident, or jostle against one in the street. The Abbé Bouche relates<sup>3</sup> that once when he was paying a visit to the chief of Agweh, one of the wives of the chief

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Ellis, *op. cit.* pp. 142-144 ;  
Le R. P. Baudin, "Féticheurs ou  
ministres religieux des Nègres de la  
Guinée," *Les Missions Catholiques*,

No. 787 (4 juillet 1884), p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Ellis, *op. cit.* pp. 150 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *La Côte des Esclaves*, pp. 127 sq.



was brought into the house by four priestesses, her face bloody, and her body covered with stripes. She had been savagely flogged for having accidentally trodden upon the foot of one of them; and the chief not only dared not give vent to his anger, but had to give them a bottle of rum as a peace-offering."<sup>1</sup>

Among the Tshi-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast, who border on the Ewe-speaking peoples of the Slave Coast to the west, the customs and beliefs in regard to the dedicated men and dedicated women, the priests and priestesses, are very similar. These persons are believed to be from time to time possessed or inspired by the deity whom they serve; and in that state they are consulted as oracles. They work themselves up to the necessary pitch of excitement by dancing to the music of drums; each god has his special hymn, sung to a special beat of the drum, and accompanied by a special dance. It is while thus dancing to the drums that the priest or priestess lets fall the oracular words in a croaking or guttural voice which the hearers take to be the voice of the god. Hence dancing has an important place in the education of priests and priestesses; they are trained in it for months before they may perform in public. These mouthpieces of the deity are consulted in almost every concern of life and are handsomely paid for their services.<sup>2</sup> "Priests marry like any other members of the community, and purchase wives; but priestesses are never married, nor can any 'head money' be paid for a priestess. The reason appears to be that a priestess belongs to the god she serves, and therefore cannot become the property of a man, as would be the case if she married one. This prohibition extends to marriage only, and a priestess is not debarred from sexual commerce. The children of a priest or priestess are not ordinarily educated for the priestly profession, one generation being usually passed over, and the grandchildren selected. Priestesses are ordinarily most licentious, and custom allows them to gratify their passions with any man who may chance to take their fancy."<sup>3</sup> The ranks of the hereditary priest-

Similarly among the Tshi peoples of the Gold Coast there are sacred men and women, who are supposed to be inspired by the deity.

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Ellis, *op. cit.* p. 147.

*peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, pp. 120-138.

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking*

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Ellis, *op. cit.* p. 121.



hood are constantly recruited by persons who devote themselves or who are devoted by their relations or masters to the profession. Men, women, and even children can thus become members of the priesthood. If a mother has lost several of her children by death, she will not uncommonly vow to devote the next born to the service of the gods; for in this way she hopes to save the child's life. So when the child is born it is set apart for the priesthood, and on arriving at maturity generally fulfils the vow made by the mother and becomes a priest or priestess. At the ceremony of ordination the votary has to prove his or her vocation for the sacred life in the usual way by falling into or simulating convulsions, dancing frantically to the beat of drums, and speaking in a hoarse unnatural voice words which are deemed to be the utterance of the deity temporarily lodged in the body of the man or woman.<sup>1</sup>

#### § 4. *Sacred Women in Western Asia*

In like manner the sacred prostitutes of Western Asia may have been viewed as possessed by the deity and married to the god.

Thus in Africa, and sometimes if not regularly in India, the sacred prostitutes attached to temples are regarded as the wives of the god, and their excesses are excused on the ground that the women are not themselves, but that they act under the influence of divine inspiration. This is in substance the explanation which I have given of the custom of sacred prostitution as it was practised in antiquity by the peoples of Western Asia. In their licentious intercourse at the temples the women, whether maidens or matrons or professional harlots, imitated the licentious conduct of a great goddess of fertility for the purpose of ensuring the fruitfulness of fields and trees, of man and beast; and in discharging this sacred and important function the women were probably supposed, like their West African sisters, to be actually possessed by the goddess. The hypothesis at least explains all the facts in a simple and natural manner; and in assum-

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Ellis, *op. cit.*, pp. 120 *sq.*, 129-138. The slaves, male and female, dedicated to a god from childhood are often mentioned by the German missionary Mr. J. Spieth in his elaborate work on the Ewe people (*Die Ewe-Stämme: Material zur Kunde des Ewe-*

*Völker in Deutsch-Togo* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 228, 229, 309, 450, 474, 792, 797, etc.). But his information does not illustrate the principal points to which I have called attention in the text.

ing that women could be married to gods it assumes a principle which we know to have been recognised in Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt.<sup>1</sup> At Babylon a woman regularly slept in the great bed of Bel or Marduk, which stood in his temple on the summit of a lofty pyramid; and it was believed that the god chose her from all the women of Babylon and slept with her in the bed. However, unlike the Indian and West African wives of gods, this spouse of the Babylonian deity is reported by Herodotus to have been chaste.<sup>2</sup> Yet we may doubt whether she was so; for these wives or perhaps paramours of Bel are probably to be identified with the wives or votaries of Marduk mentioned in the code of Hammurabi, and we know from the code that female votaries of the gods might be mothers and married to men.<sup>3</sup> At Babylon the sun-god Shamash as well as Marduk had human wives formally dedicated to his service, and they like the votaries of Marduk might have children.<sup>4</sup> It is significant that a name for these Babylonian votaries was *ḫadishtu*, which is the same word as *ḫedesha*, "consecrated woman," the regular Hebrew word for a temple harlot.<sup>5</sup> It is true that the law severely punished any disrespect shown to these sacred women;<sup>6</sup> but the example of West Africa warns us that a formal respect shown to such persons, even when it is enforced by severe penalties, need be no proof at all of their virtuous character.<sup>7</sup> In Egypt a woman used to sleep in the

<sup>1</sup> See my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 170-173.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, i. 181 *sq.* It is not clear whether the same or a different woman slept every night in the temple.

<sup>3</sup> H. Winckler, *Die Gesetze Hammurabi*<sup>2</sup> (Leipzig, 1903), p. 31, § 182; C. H. W. Johns, *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts, and Letters* (Edinburgh, 1904), pp. 54, 55, 59, 60, 61 (§§ 137, 144, 145, 146, 178, 182, 187, 192, 193, of the Code of Hammurabi). As to these female votaries see especially C. H. W. Johns, "Notes on the Code of Hammurabi," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, xix. (January 1903) pp. 98-107. Compare S. A. Cook, *The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi* (London, 1903), pp. 147-150.

<sup>4</sup> C. H. W. Johns, "Notes on the Code of Hammurabi," *i.e.*, where we read (p. 104) of a female votary of Shamash who had a daughter.

<sup>5</sup> *Code of Hammurabi*, § 181; C. H. W. Johns, "Notes on the Code of Hammurabi," *op. cit.* pp. 100 *sq.*; S. A. Cook, *op. cit.* p. 148. Mr. Johns translates the name by "temple maid" (*Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts, and Letters*, p. 61). He is scrupulously polite to these ladies, but I gather from him that a far less charitable view of their religious vocation is taken by Father Scheil, the first editor and translator of the code.

<sup>6</sup> Any man proved to have pointed the finger of scorn at a votary was liable to be branded on the forehead (*Code of Hammurabi*, § 127).

<sup>7</sup> See above, pp. 60 *sq.*



temple of Ammon at Thebes, and the god was believed to visit her.<sup>1</sup> Egyptian texts often mention her as "the divine consort," and in old days she seems to have usually been the Queen of Egypt herself.<sup>2</sup> But in the time of Strabo, at the beginning of our era, these consorts or concubines of Ammon, as they were called, were beautiful young girls of noble birth, who held office only till puberty. During their term of office they prostituted themselves freely to any man who took their fancy. After puberty they were given in marriage, and a ceremony of mourning was performed for them as if they were dead.<sup>3</sup> When they died in good earnest, their bodies were laid in special graves.<sup>4</sup>

### § 5. Sacred Men in Western Asia

Similarly the sacred men (*kedeshim*) of Western Asia may have been regarded as possessed by the deity and as acting and speaking in his name.

As in West Africa the dedicated women have their counterpart in the dedicated men, so it was in Western Asia; for there the sacred men (*kedeshim*) clearly corresponded to the sacred women (*kedeshoth*), in other words, the sacred male slaves<sup>5</sup> of the temples were the complement of the sacred female slaves. And as the characteristic feature of the dedicated men in West Africa is their supposed possession or inspiration by the deity, so we may conjecture was it with the sacred male slaves (the *kedeshim*) of Western Asia; they, too, may have been regarded as temporary or permanent embodiments of the deity, possessed from time to time by his divine spirit, acting in his name, and speaking with his voice.<sup>6</sup> At all events we know that this was so at the

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 182.

<sup>2</sup> A. Wiedemann, *Herodotus Zweites Buch*, pp. 268 sq. See farther my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 171 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xvii. 1. 46, p. 816. The title "concubines of Zeus (Ammon)" is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus (i. 47).

<sup>4</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 47.

<sup>5</sup> The *ιερόδουλοι*, as the Greeks called them.

<sup>6</sup> I have to thank the Rev. Professor R. H. Kennett for this important suggestion as to the true nature of the *kedeshim*. The passages of the Bible

in which mention is made of these men are Deuteronomy xxiii. 17 (in Hebrew 18); 1 Kings xiv. 24, xv. 12, xxii. 46 (in Hebrew 47); 2 Kings xxiii. 7; Job xxxvi. 14 (where *kedeshim* is translated "the unclean" in the English version). The usual rendering of *kedeshim* in the English Bible is not justified by any of these passages; but it may perhaps derive support from a reference which Eusebius makes to the profligate rites observed at Aphaca (*Vita Constantini*, iii. 55; *Migne's Patrologia Græca*, xx. 1120): *Γόμῳδες γὰρ οὗτοι ἄνδρες οὐκ ἄνδρες, τὸ σέμνον τῆς πόσεως ἀπαρνησάμενοι, θηλεία νόσῳ τὴν δαίμονα ἑλκύνον.*



sanctuary of the Moon among the Albanians of the Caucasus. The sanctuary owned church lands of great extent peopled by sacred slaves, and it was ruled by a high-priest, who ranked next after the king. Many of these slaves were inspired by the deity and prophesied; and when one of them had been for some time in this state of divine frenzy, wandering alone in the forest, the high-priest had him caught, bound with a sacred chain, and maintained in luxury for a year. Then the poor wretch was led out, anointed with unguents, and sacrificed with other victims to the Moon. The mode of sacrifice was this. A man took a sacred spear, and thrust it through the victim's side to the heart. As he staggered and fell, the rest observed him closely and drew omens from the manner of his fall. Then the body was dragged or carried away to a certain place, where all his fellows stood upon it by way of purification.<sup>1</sup> In this custom the prophet, or rather the maniac, was plainly supposed to be moon-struck in the most literal sense, that is, possessed or inspired by the deity of the Moon, who was perhaps thought by the Albanians, as by the Phrygians,<sup>2</sup> to be a male god, since his chosen minister and mouthpiece was a man, not a woman.<sup>3</sup> It can hardly therefore be deemed improbable that at other sanctuaries of Western Asia, where sacred men were kept, these ministers of religion may have discharged a similar prophetic function, even though they did not share the tragic fate of the moon-struck Albanian prophet. Nor was the influence of these Asiatic prophets confined to Asia. In Sicily the spark which kindled the devastating Servile War was struck by a Syrian slave, who simulated the prophetic ecstasy in order to rouse his fellow-slaves to arms in the name of the Syrian goddess. To inflame still more his inflammatory words this ancient Mahdi ingeniously interlarded them with real fire and smoke, which by a common conjurer's trick he breathed from his lips.<sup>4</sup>

But probably Eusebius is here speaking of the men who castrated themselves in honour of the goddess, and thereafter wore female attire. See Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 51; and below, pp. 224 sq.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xi. 4. 7, p. 503.

<sup>2</sup> Drexler, in W. H. Roscher's

*Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. v. "Men," ii. 2687 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> It is true that Strabo (*l.c.*) speaks of the Albanian deity as a goddess, but this may be only an accommodation to the usage of the Greek language, in which the moon is feminine.

<sup>4</sup> Florus, *Epitoma*, ii. 7; Diodorus

Resemblance of the Hebrew prophets to the sacred men of Western Africa.

In like manner the Hebrew prophets were believed to be temporarily possessed and inspired by a divine spirit who spoke through them, just as a divine spirit is supposed by West African negroes to speak through the mouth of the dedicated men his priests. Indeed the points of resemblance between the prophets of Israel and West Africa are close and curious. Like their black brothers, the Hebrew prophets employed music in order to bring on the prophetic trance;<sup>1</sup> like them, they received the divine spirit through the application of a magic oil to their heads;<sup>2</sup> like them, they were apparently distinguished from common people by certain marks on the face;<sup>3</sup> and like them they were consulted not merely in great national emergencies but in the ordinary affairs of everyday life, in which they were expected to give information and advice for a small fee. For example, Samuel was consulted about lost asses,<sup>4</sup> just as a Zulu diviner is consulted about lost cows;<sup>5</sup> and we have seen Elisha acting as a dowser when water ran short.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, we learn that the old name for a prophet was a seer,<sup>7</sup> a word which may be understood to imply that his special function was divination rather than prophecy in the sense of prediction. Be that as it may,

Siculus, Frag. xxxiv. 2 (vol. v. pp. 87 *sq.*, ed. L. Dindorf, in the Teubner series).

<sup>1</sup> Above, pp. 45 *sq.*

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xix. 16; Isaiah lx. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings xx. 41. So in Africa "priests and priestesses are readily distinguishable from the rest of the community. They wear their hair long and unkempt. . . . Frequently both appear with white circles painted round their eyes, or with various white devices, marks, or lines painted on the face, neck, shoulders, or arms" (A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, p. 123). "Besides the ordinary tribal tattoo-marks borne by all natives, the priesthood in Dahomi bear a variety of such marks, some very elaborate, and an expert can tell by the marks on a priest to what god he is vowed, and what rank he holds in the order. These hierarchical marks consist of lines, scrolls, diamonds, and other patterns, with sometimes a figure, such

as that of the crocodile or chameleon. The shoulders are frequently seen covered with an infinite number of small marks like dots, set close together. All these marks are considered sacred, and the laity are forbidden to touch them" (A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, p. 146). The reason why the prophet's shoulders are especially marked is perhaps given by the statement of a Zulu that "the sensitive part with a doctor [medicine-man] is his shoulders. Everything he feels is in the situation of his shoulders. That is the place where black men feel the Amatongo" (ancestral spirits). See H. Callaway, *The Religious System of the Amasulu*, part ii. p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel ix. 1-20.

<sup>5</sup> Callaway, *The Religious System of the Amasulu*, part iii. pp. 300 *sqq.*

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Samuel ix. 9.



prophecy of the Hebrew type has not been limited to Israel ; it is indeed a phenomenon of almost world-wide occurrence ; in many lands and in many ages the wild, whirling words of frenzied men and women have been accepted as the utterances of an indwelling deity. What does distinguish Hebrew prophecy from all others is that the genius of a few members of the profession wrested this vulgar but powerful instrument from baser uses, and by wielding it in the interest of a high morality rendered a service of incalculable value to humanity. That is indeed the glory of Israel, but it is not the side of prophecy with which we are here concerned.

More to our purpose is to note that prophecy of the ordinary sort appears to have been in vogue at Byblus, the sacred city of Adonis, centuries before the life-time of the earliest Hebrew prophet whose writings have come down to us. When the Egyptian traveller, Wen-Ammon, was lingering in the port of Byblus, under the King's orders to quit the place, the spirit of God came on one of the royal pages or henchmen, and in a prophetic frenzy he announced that the King should receive the Egyptian stranger as a messenger sent from the god Ammon.<sup>1</sup> The god who thus took possession of the page and spoke through him was probably Adonis, the god of the city. With regard to the office of these royal pages we have no information ; but as ministers of a sacred king and liable to be inspired by the deity, they would naturally be themselves sacred ; in fact they may have belonged to the class of sacred slaves or *kedeshim*. If that was so it would confirm the conclusion to which the foregoing investigation points, namely, that originally no sharp line of distinction existed between the prophets and the *kedeshim* ; both were "men of God," as the prophets

Inspired  
prophets  
at Byblus.

<sup>1</sup> W. Max Müller, in *Mittheilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1900, No. 1, p. 17 ; A. Erman, "Eine Reise nach Phönizien im 11. Jahrhundert v. Chr." *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde*, xxxviii. (1900) pp. 6 sq. ; G. Maspero, *Les contes populaires de l'Égypte Ancienne*,<sup>3</sup> p. 192 ; A. Wiedemann, *Altägyptische Sagen und Märchen* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 99 sq.

Scholars differ as to whether Wen-Ammon's narrative is to be regarded as history or romance ; but even if it were proved to be a fiction, we might safely assume that the incident of the prophetic frenzy at Byblus was based upon familiar facts. Prof. Wiedemann thinks that the god who inspired the page was the Egyptian Ammon, not the Phœnician Adonis, but this view seems to me less probable.



were constantly called ;<sup>1</sup> in other words, they were inspired mediums, men in whom the god manifested himself from time to time by word and deed, in short temporary incarnations of the deity. But while the prophets roved freely about the country, the *kedeshim* appear to have been regularly attached to a sanctuary ; and among the duties which they performed at the shrines there were clearly some which revolted the conscience of men imbued with a purer morality. What these duties were, we may surmise partly from the behaviour of the sons of Eli to the women who came to the tabernacle,<sup>2</sup> partly from the beliefs and practices as to "holy men" which survive to this day among the Syrian peasantry.

"Holy men" in modern Syria.

Of these "holy men" we are told that "so far as they are not impostors, they are men whom we would call insane, known among the Syrians as *mejnûn*, possessed by a *jinn* or spirit. They often go in filthy garments, or without clothing. Since they are regarded as intoxicated by deity, the most dignified men, and of the highest standing among the Moslems, submit to utter indecent language at their bidding without rebuke, and ignorant Moslem women do not shrink from their approach, because in their superstitious belief they attribute to them, as men possessed by God, a divine authority which they dare not resist. Such an attitude of compliance may be exceptional, but there are more than rumours of its existence. These 'holy men' differ from the ordinary dervishes whom travellers so often see in Cairo, and from the ordinary madmen who are kept in fetters, so that they may not do injury to themselves and others. But their appearance, and the expressions regarding them, afford some illustrations of the popular estimate of ancient seers, or prophets, in the time of Hosea: 'The prophet is a fool, the man that hath the spirit is mad'<sup>3</sup> ;

<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel ix. 6-8, 10 ; 1 Kings xiii. 1, 4-8, 11 etc.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel ii. 22. Totally different from their Asiatic namesakes were the "sacred men" and "sacred women" who were charged with the superintendence of the mysteries at Andania in Messenia. They were chosen by lot and held office for a year. The

sacred women might be either married or single ; the married women had to swear that they had been true to their husbands. See Diittenberger, *Syllage Inscriptionum Græcarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 653 ; *Leges Græcarum Sacras*, ed. J. de Prot, L. Ziehen, Pars Altera, No. 58, pp. 166 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Hosea ix. 7.

and in the time of Jeremiah,<sup>1</sup> the man who made himself a prophet was considered as good as a madman."<sup>2</sup> To complete the parallel these vagabonds "are also believed to be possessed of prophetic power, so that they are able to foretell the future, and warn the people among whom they live of impending danger."<sup>3</sup>

We may conjecture that with women a powerful motive for submitting to the embraces of the "holy men" is a hope of obtaining offspring by them. For in Syria it is still believed that even dead saints can beget children on barren women, who accordingly resort to their shrines in order to obtain the wish of their hearts. For example, at the Baths of Solomon in northern Palestine, blasts of hot air escape from the ground; and one of them, named Abu Rabah, is a famous resort of childless wives who wish to satisfy their maternal longings. They let the hot air stream up over their bodies and really believe that children born to them after such a visit are begotten by the saint of the shrine.<sup>4</sup> But the saint who enjoys the highest reputation in this respect is St. George. He reveals himself at his shrines which are scattered all over the country; at each of them there is a tomb or the likeness of a tomb. The most celebrated of these sanctuaries is at Kalat el Hosn in northern Syria. Barren women of all sects, including Moslems, resort to it. "There are many natives who shrug their shoulders when this shrine is mentioned in connection with women. But it is doubtless true that many do not

The license accorded to such "holy men" may be explained by the desire of women for offspring.

<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah xxix. 26.

<sup>2</sup> S. I. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, pp. 150 sq.

<sup>3</sup> S. I. Curtiss, *op. cit.* p. 152. As to these "holy men," see further C. R. Conder, *Tent-work in Palestine*, ii. 231 sq.: "The most peculiar class of men in the country is that of the Derwishes, or sacred personages, who wander from village to village, performing tricks, living on alms, and enjoying certain social and domestic privileges, which very often lead to scandalous scenes. Some of these men are mad, some are fanatics, but the majority are, I imagine, rogues. They

are revered not only by the peasantry, but also sometimes by the governing class. I have seen the Kady of Nazareth ostentatiously preparing food for a miserable and filthy beggar, who sat in the justice-hall, and was consulted as if he had been inspired. A Derwish of peculiar eminence is often dressed in good clothes, with a spotless turban, and is preceded by a banner-bearer, and followed by a band, with drum, cymbal, and tambourine. . . . It is natural to reflect whether the social position of the Prophets among the Jews may not have resembled that of the Derwishes."

<sup>4</sup> S. I. Curtiss, *op. cit.* pp. 116 sq.



know what seems to be its true character, and who think that the most puissant saint, as they believe, in the world can give them sons." "But the true character of the place is beginning to be recognised, so that many Moslems have forbidden their wives to visit it."<sup>1</sup>

### § 6. *Sons of God*

Belief that  
men and  
women  
may be the  
offspring  
of a god.

Customs like the foregoing may serve to explain the belief, which is not confined to Syria, that men and women may be in fact and not merely in metaphor the sons and daughters of a god; for these modern saints, whether Christian or Moslems, who father the children of Syrian mothers, are nothing but the old gods under a thin disguise. If in antiquity as at the present day Semitic women often repaired to shrines in order to have the reproach of barrenness removed from them—and the prayer of Hannah is a familiar example of the practice,<sup>2</sup> we could easily understand not only the tradition of the sons of God who begat children on the daughters of men,<sup>3</sup> but also the exceedingly common occurrence of the divine titles in Hebrew names of human beings.<sup>4</sup> Multitudes of men and women, in fact, whose mothers had resorted to holy places in order to procure offspring, would be regarded as the actual children of the god and would be named accordingly. Hence Hannah called her infant Samuel, which means "name of God" or "his name is God";<sup>5</sup> and probably she sincerely believed that the child was actually begotten in her womb by the deity.<sup>6</sup> The dedication of such children to the service of

<sup>1</sup> S. I. Curtiss, *op. cit.* pp. 118, 119. In India also some Mohammedan saints are noted as givers of children. Thus at Fatepur-Sikri, near Agra, is the grave of Salim Chishti, and childless women tie rags to the delicate tracery of the tomb, "thus bringing them into direct communion with the spirit of the holy man" (W. Crooke, *Natives of Northern India*, p. 203).

<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel i.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis vi. 1-3. In this passage "the sons of God (or rather of the gods)" probably means, in accordance with a common Hebrew idiom, no more than "the gods," just as the

phrase "sons of the prophets" means the prophets themselves. For more examples of this idiom, see Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> For example, all Hebrew names ending in *-el* or *-iah* are compounds of *El* or *Yahwe*, two names of the divinity. See G. B. Gray, *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names*, pp. 149-199.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p. 1028. But compare *Encyclopædia Biblica*, iii. 3285, iv. 4452.

<sup>6</sup> A trace of a similar belief perhaps survives in the narratives of Genesis



God at the sanctuary was merely giving back the divine son to the divine father. Similarly in West Africa, when a woman has got a child at the shrine of Agbasia, the god who alone bestows offspring on women, she dedicates him or her as a sacred slave to the deity.<sup>1</sup>

Thus in the Syrian beliefs and customs of to-day we probably have the clue to the religious prostitution practised in the very same regions in antiquity. Then as now women looked to the local god, the Baal or Adonis of old, the Abu Rabah or St. George of to-day, to satisfy the natural craving of a woman's heart; and then as now, apparently, the part of the local god was played by sacred men, who in personating him may often have sincerely believed that they were acting under divine inspiration, and that the functions which they discharged were necessary for the fertility of the land as well as for the propagation of the human species. The purifying influence of Christianity and Mohammedanism has restricted such customs within narrow limits; even under Turkish rule they are now only carried on in holes and corners. Yet if the practice has dwindled, the principle which it embodies appears to be fundamentally the same; it is a desire for the continuance of the species, and a belief that an object so natural and legitimate can be accomplished by divine power manifesting itself in the bodies of men and women.

The belief in the physical fatherhood of God has not been confined to Syria in ancient and modern times. Elsewhere many men have been counted the sons of God in the most literal sense of the word, being supposed to have been begotten by his holy spirit in the wombs of mortal women. Here I shall merely illustrate the creed by a few examples drawn from classical antiquity.<sup>2</sup> Thus in order to obtain offspring women used to resort to the great sanctuary of Aesculapius, situated in a beautiful upland valley, to which a path, winding through a long wooded gorge, leads from the bay of Epidaurus. Here the women slept in the

The saints in modern Syria are the equivalents of the ancient Baal or Adonis.

Belief in the physical fatherhood of God not confined to Syria.

Sons of the serpent-god.

xxx. and Judges xiii., where barren women are represented as conceiving children after the visit of God, or of an angel of God, in the likeness of a man.

<sup>1</sup> J. Spieth, *Die Erde-Stämme*, pp. 446, 448-450.

<sup>2</sup> For more instances see H. Usener, *Das Weihnachtsfest*, i. 70 sqq.

Sons of the  
serpent-  
god.

holy place and were visited in dreams by a serpent; and the children to whom they afterwards gave birth were believed to have been begotten by the reptile.<sup>1</sup> That the serpent was supposed to be the god himself seems certain; for Aesculapius repeatedly appeared in the form of a serpent,<sup>2</sup> and live serpents were kept and fed in his sanctuaries for the healing of the sick, being no doubt regarded as his incarnations.<sup>3</sup> Hence the children born to women who had thus visited a sanctuary of Aesculapius were probably fathered on the serpent-god. Many celebrated men in classical antiquity were thus promoted to the heavenly hierarchy by similar legends of a miraculous birth. The famous Aratus of Sicyon was certainly believed by his countrymen to be a son of Aesculapius; his mother is said to have got him in intercourse with a serpent.<sup>4</sup> Probably she slept either in the shrine of Aesculapius at Sicyon, where a figurine of her was shown seated on a serpent,<sup>5</sup> or perhaps in the more secluded sanctuary of the god at Titane, not many miles off, where the sacred serpents crawled among ancient cypresses on the hill-top which overlooks the narrow green valley of the Asopus with the white turbid river rushing in its depths.<sup>6</sup> There, under the shadow of the cypresses, with the murmur of the Asopus in her ears, the mother of Aratus may have conceived, or fancied she conceived, the future deliverer of his country. Again, the mother of Augustus is said to have got him by intercourse with a serpent in a temple of Apollo; hence the emperor was reputed to be the son of that god.<sup>7</sup> Similar tales were told of the Messenian hero Aristomenes, Alexander

<sup>1</sup> Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 803, lines 117 sqq., 129 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, ii. 10. 3 (with my note), iii. 23. 7; Livy, xi. Epitome; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxix. 72; Valerius Maximus, i. 8. 2; Ovid, *Metam.* xv. 626-744; Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustr.* 22; Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.* 94.

<sup>3</sup> Aristophanes, *Plutus*, 733; Pausanias, ii. 11. 8; Herodas, *Mimiambi*, iv. 90 sq.; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 802,

lines 116 sqq.; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 1069.

<sup>4</sup> Pausanias, ii. 10. 3, iv. 14. 7 sq.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 10. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 11. 5-8.

<sup>7</sup> Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 94; Dio Cassius, xiv. 1. 2. Tame serpents were kept in a sacred grove of Apollo in Ephrus. A virgin priestess fed them, and omens of plenty and health or the opposites were drawn from the way in which the reptiles took their food from her. See Aelian, *Nat. Hist.* xi. 2.



the Great, and the elder Scipio: all of them were reported to have been begotten by snakes.<sup>1</sup> In the time of Herod a serpent, according to Aelian, in like manner made love to a Judean maid.<sup>2</sup> Can the story be a distorted rumour of the parentage of Christ?

### § 7. Reincarnation of the Dead

The reason why snakes were so often supposed to be the fathers of human beings is probably to be found in the common belief that the dead come to life and revisit their old homes in the shape of serpents.

Belief that the dead come to life in the form of serpents.

This, for example, is believed by the Zulus and other Caffre tribes,<sup>3</sup> the Ngoni,<sup>4</sup> the Wabondei,<sup>5</sup> the Masai,<sup>6</sup> the Dinkas of the Upper Nile,<sup>7</sup> and the Betsileo and other tribes of Madagascar.<sup>8</sup> Where serpents are thus viewed as

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, iv. 14. 7; Livy, xxvi. 19; Aulus Gellius, vi. 1; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 2. All these cases have been already cited in this connection by L. Deubner, *De incubatione* (Leipzig, 1900), p. 33 note.

<sup>2</sup> Aelian, *De natura animalium*, vi. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Arboisset et Daumas, *Voyage d'Exploration* (Paris, 1842), p. 277; Callaway, *Religious System of the Amuzulu*, part ii. pp. 140-144, 196-200, 208-212; J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal*, p. 162; E. Casalis, *The Basutos*, p. 246; (*South African*) *Folklore Journal*, ii. (1880) pp. 101-103; A. Knoch, *Natur- und Kulturleben der Zulus* (Wiesbaden, 1880), p. 112; F. Speckmann, *Die Hermannsburgers Mission in Afrika*, pp. 165-167; Dudley Kidd, *The Essential Kafir* (London, 1904), pp. 85-87.

<sup>4</sup> W. A. Emslie, *Among the Wild Ngoni* (London, 1899), pp. 71 sq.

<sup>5</sup> O. Baumann, *Usambara und seine Nachbargebiete* (Berlin, 1891), pp. 141 sq.

<sup>6</sup> S. L. Hinde and H. Hinde, *The Last of the Masai* (London, 1901), pp. 101 sq.; A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 307 sq.; Sir H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate*, ii. 832.

<sup>7</sup> E. de Pruyssenaere, *Reisen und Forschungen im Gebiete des Weissen und Blauen Nil* (Gotha, 1877), p. 27 (*Petermann's Mittheilungen, Ergänzungsheft*, No. 50). Compare G. Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*,<sup>2</sup> i. 55.

<sup>8</sup> G. A. Shaw, "The Betsileo," *The Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine, Reprint of the First Four Numbers* (Antananarivo, 1885), p. 411; H. W. Little, *Madagascar, its History and People* (London, 1884), pp. 86 sq.; A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totémisme à Madagascar* (Paris, 1904), pp. 272 sqq. Among the Bahima of Ankole dead chiefs turn into serpents, but dead kings into lions. See J. Roscoe, "The Bahima, a Cow Tribe of Ankole in the Uganda Protectorate," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxvii. (1907); Major J. A. Meldon, "Notes on the Bahima of Ankole," *Journal of the African Society*, No. xxii. (January 1907), p. 151. Major Leonard holds that the pythons worshipped in Southern Nigeria are regarded as reincarnations of the dead; but this seems very doubtful. See A. G. Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes* (London, 1906), pp. 327 sqq. Pythons are worshipped by the Ewe-speaking



ancestors come to life, the people naturally treat them with great respect and often feed them with milk,<sup>1</sup> perhaps because milk is the food of human babes and the reptiles are treated as human beings in embryo, who can be born again from women. The Romans and Greeks appear to have also believed that the souls of the dead were incarnate in the bodies of serpents. Among the Romans the regular symbol of the *genius* or guardian spirit of every man was a serpent,<sup>2</sup> and in Roman houses serpents were lodged and fed in such numbers that if their swarms had not been sometimes reduced by conflagrations there would have been no living for them.<sup>3</sup> In Greek legend Cadmus and his wife Harmonia were turned at death into snakes.<sup>4</sup> When the Spartan king Cleomenes was slain and crucified in Egypt, a great serpent coiled round his head on the cross and kept off the vultures from his face. The people regarded the prodigy as a proof that Cleomenes was a son of the gods.<sup>5</sup> Again, when Plotinus lay dying, a snake crawled from under his bed and disappeared into a hole in the wall, and at the same moment the philosopher expired.<sup>6</sup> Apparently superstition saw in these serpents the souls of the dead men. In Greek religion the serpent was indeed the regular symbol or attribute of the worshipful dead,<sup>7</sup> and we can hardly doubt that the early Greeks, like the Zulus and other African tribes at the present day, really believed the soul of

peoples of the Slave Coast, but apparently not from a belief that the souls of the dead are lodged in them. See A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. 54-199.

<sup>1</sup> Milk is offered for this reason to serpents by the Zulus (E. Casalis and A. Kranz, *l.c.*), Masai (A. C. Hollis, *l.c.*), the Dinkas (E. de Pruyssenaere, *l.c.*), and the Betsileo (H. W. Little, *l.c.*). The Rev. J. Roscoe tells me that serpents are revered and fed with milk by the Bunyoro, to the north of Uganda; but he cannot say whether the creatures are supposed to be incarnations of the dead. The negroes of Whydah in Guinea also feed with milk the serpents which they worship (Astley's *Voyager and Travels*, iii. 29).

<sup>2</sup> L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 196 sq.; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 155. The worship of the Genius was very popular in the Roman Empire. See J. Toutain, *Les Cultes Païens dans l'Empire Romain*, Première Partie, i. (Paris, 1907) pp. 439-199.

<sup>3</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxix. 72. Compare Seneca, *De Ira*, iv. 31. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Apollodorus, iii. 5. 4; Hyginus, *Fab.* 6; Ovid, *Metam.* iv. 563-603.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Cleomenes*, 39.

<sup>6</sup> Porphyry, *De vita Plotini*, p. 103, Didot edition (appended to the lives of Diogenes Laertius).

<sup>7</sup> Plutarch, *Cleomenes*, 39; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Plutus*, 733.

The  
Greeks and  
Romans  
seem to  
have  
shared this  
belief.

the departed to be lodged in the reptile. The sacred serpent which lived in the Erechtheum at Athens, and was fed with honey-cakes once a month, may have been supposed to house the soul of the dead king Erechtheus, who had reigned in his lifetime on the same spot.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the libations of milk which the Greeks poured upon graves<sup>2</sup> were intended to be drunk by serpents as the embodiments of the deceased; on two tombstones found at Tegea a man and a woman are respectively represented holding out to a serpent a cup which may be supposed to contain milk.<sup>3</sup> We have seen that various African tribes feed serpents with milk because they imagine the reptiles to be incarnations of their dead kinsfolk;<sup>4</sup> and the Dinkas, who practise the custom, also pour milk on the graves of their friends for some time after the burial.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that a common type in Greek art, which exhibits a woman feeding a serpent out of a saucer, may have been borrowed from a practice of thus ministering to the souls of the departed.<sup>6</sup>

Further, at the sowing festival of the Thesmophoria, held by Greek women in October, it was customary to throw cakes and pigs to serpents, which lived in caverns or vaults sacred to the corn-goddess Demeter.<sup>7</sup> We may

The serpents fed at the Thesmophoria may have been deemed incarnations of the dead.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, viii. 41; Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 10; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 758 sq., with the Scholium; Philostratus, *Imag.* ii. 17. 6. See further my note on Pausanias, i. 18. 2 (vol. ii. pp. 168 sqq.).

<sup>2</sup> Sophocles, *Electra*, 893 sqq.; Euripides, *Orestes*, 112 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> *Mittheilungen des Deutsch. Archäolog. Institutes in Athen*, iv. (1879) pl. viii. Compare *ib.* pp. 135 sq., 162 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Above, pp. 73 sq.

<sup>5</sup> E. de Pruyssenaere, *l.c.* (above, p. 73, note 7).

<sup>6</sup> See C. O. Müller, *Denkmäler der alten Kunst*<sup>2</sup> (Göttingen, 1854), pl. lxi. with the corresponding text in vol. i. (where the eccentric system of paging adopted renders references to it practically useless). In these groups the female figure is commonly, and perhaps correctly, interpreted as the Goddess of Health (Hygieia). It is to be remembered that Hygieia was

deemed a daughter of the serpent-god Aesculapius (Pausanias, i. 23. 4), and was constantly associated with him in ritual and art. See, for example, Pausanias, i. 40. 6, ii. 4. 5, ii. 11. 6, ii. 23. 4, ii. 27. 6, iii. 22. 13, v. 20. 3, v. 26. 2, vii. 23. 7, viii. 28. 1, viii. 31. 1, viii. 32. 4, viii. 47. 1. The snake-entwined goddess whose image was found in a prehistoric shrine at Gournia in Crete may have been a predecessor of the serpent-feeding Hygieia. See R. M. Burrows, *The Discoveries in Crete* (London, 1907), pp. 137 sq. I conjecture that the snakes, which were the regular symbol of the Furies, may have been originally nothing but the emblems or rather embodiments of the dead; and that the Furies themselves may, like Aesculapius, have been developed out of the reptiles, sloughing off their serpent skins through the anthropomorphic tendency of Greek thought.

<sup>7</sup> Scholia on Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.*



guess that the serpents thus propitiated were deemed to be incarnations of dead men and women, who might easily be incommoded in their earthy beds by the operations of husbandry. What indeed could be more disturbing than to have the roof of the narrow house shaken and rent over their heads by clumsy oxen dragging a plough up and down on the top of it? No wonder that at such times it was thought desirable to appease them with offerings. Sometimes, however, it is not the dead but the Earth Goddess herself who is disturbed by the husbandman. An Indian prophet at Priest Rapids, on the Middle Columbia River, dissuaded his many followers from tilling the ground because "it is a sin to wound or cut, tear up or scratch our common mother by agricultural pursuits."<sup>1</sup> In Bengal the chief festival in honour of Mother Earth is held at the end of the hot season, when she is supposed to suffer from the impurity common to women, and during that time all ploughing, sowing, and other work cease.<sup>2</sup> On a certain day of the year, when offerings are made to the Earth, the Ewe farmer of West Africa will not hoe the ground and the Ewe weaver will not drive a sharp stake into it, "because the hoe and the stake would wound the Earth and cause her pain."<sup>3</sup> When Ratumaimbulu, the god who made fruit-trees to blossom and bear fruit, came once a year to Fiji, the people had to live very quietly for a month lest they should disturb him at his important work. During this time they might not plant nor build nor sail about nor go to war; indeed most kinds of work were forbidden. The priests announced the time of the god's arrival and departure.<sup>4</sup> These periods of rest and quiet would seem to be the Indian and Fijian Lent.

Thus behind the Greek notion that women may conceive by a serpent-god<sup>5</sup> seems to lie the belief that they can con-

Reluctance  
to disturb  
the Earth  
Goddess.

ii. (*Scholia in Lucianum*, ed. H. Rabe, Leipzig, 1906, pp. 275 sq.). As to the Thesmophoria, see *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,<sup>9</sup> xxlii. 295 sqq.

<sup>1</sup> A. S. Gatschet, *The Klamath Indians of South-western Oregon* (Washington, 1890), p. xcii.

<sup>2</sup> W. Crooke, *Natives of Northern India* (London, 1907), p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> J. Spieth, *Die Ewe-Stämme*, p. 796.

<sup>4</sup> J. E. Erskine, *Journal of a Cruise among the Islands of the Western Pacific* (London, 1853), pp. 245 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Persons initiated into the mysteries of Sabazius had a serpent drawn through the bosom of their robes, and the reptile was identified with the god (ὁ διὰ κόλπον θεός (Clement of Alexandria, *Pro-*



ceive by the dead in the form of serpents. If such a belief were ever held, it would be natural that barren women should resort to graves in order to have their wombs quickened, and this may explain why they visited the shrine of the serpent-god Aesculapius for that purpose; the shrine was perhaps at first a grave. It is significant that in Syria the shrines of St. George, to which childless women go to get offspring, always include a tomb or the likeness of one;<sup>1</sup> and further, that in the opinion of Syrian peasants at the present day women may, without intercourse with a living man, bear children to a dead husband, a dead saint, or a jinnee.<sup>2</sup> In the East Indies also it is still commonly believed that spirits can consort with women and beget children on them.<sup>3</sup>

Graves as  
places of  
conception  
for women.

Such beliefs are closely akin to the idea, entertained by many peoples, that the souls of the dead may pass directly into the wombs of women and be born again as infants. Thus the Hurons used to bury little children beside the paths in the hope that their souls might enter the passing squaws and be born again;<sup>4</sup> and similarly some negroes of West Africa throw the bodies of infants into the bush in order that their souls may choose a new mother from the women who pass by.<sup>5</sup> Among the Bangalas, a tribe of cannibals in Equatorial Africa, to the north of the Congo, a woman was one day seen digging a hole in the public road. Her husband entreated a Belgian officer to let her alone, promising to mend the road afterwards, and explaining that his wife wished to become a mother. The good-natured officer complied with his request and watched the woman. She continued to dig till she had uncovered a little skeleton, the remains of her first-born, which she tenderly embraced,

Reincar-  
nation of  
the dead in  
America  
and Africa.

*trept.* ii. 16, p. 14, ed. Potter). This may be a trace of the belief that women can be impregnated by serpents, though it does not appear that the ceremony was performed only on women.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 69. Among the South Slavs women go to graves to get children. See below, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> S. I. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, pp. 115 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> A. C. Kruijt, *Het Animisme in den Indischen Archipel* (The Hague, 1906), p. 398.

<sup>4</sup> *Rélations des Jésuites*, 1636, p. 130 (Canadian Reprint). This and some of the following instances have been already cited by Mr. J. E. King, who suggests, with much probability, that the special modes of burial adopted for infants in various parts of the world may often have been intended to ensure their rebirth. See J. E. King, "Infant Burial," *Classical Review*, xvii. (1903) pp. 83 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa* (London, 1897), p. 478.

humbly entreating the dead child to enter into her and give her again a mother's joy. The officer rightly did not smile.<sup>1</sup> In Uganda stillborn babes and children born feet foremost who die in infancy are buried at cross-roads, and mounds are raised over their remains. When women or girls pass by such a grave, they throw grass, sticks, or dust on it for the purpose, as they allege, of preventing the ghost of the child from entering them and being reborn.<sup>2</sup>

Reincarnation of the dead in India.

Again, when a child dies in Northern India it is usually buried under the threshold of the house, "in the belief that as the parents tread daily over its grave, its soul will be reborn in the family. Here, as Mr. Rose suggests, we reach an explanation of the rule that children of Hindus are buried, not cremated. Their souls do not pass into the ether with the smoke of the pyre, but remain on earth to be reincarnated in the household."<sup>3</sup> Among the Kois of the Godavari district, in Southern India, the dead are usually burnt, but the bodies of children and of young men and women are buried. If a child dies within a month of its birth, it is generally buried close to the house "so that the rain, dripping from the eaves, may fall upon the grave, and thereby cause the parents to be blessed with another child."<sup>4</sup> Apparently it is supposed that the soul of the dead child, refreshed and revived by the rain, will pass again into the mother's womb. Indian criminal records contain many cases in which "the ceremonial killing of a male child has been performed as a cure for barrenness, the theory being that the soul of the murdered boy becomes reincarnated in the woman, who performs the rite with a desire to secure offspring. Usually she effects union with the spirit of the child by bathing over its body or in the water in which the corpse has been washed. Cases have recently occurred in which the woman actually bathed in the blood of the child."<sup>5</sup> On the fifth day after a death the Gonds perform the ceremony of bringing

<sup>1</sup> Th. Masui, *Guide de la Section de l'État Indépendant du Congo à l'Exposition de Bruxelles-Tervueren en 1897* (Brussels, 1897), pp. 113 sq.

<sup>2</sup> From notes furnished to me by the Rev. J. Roscoe, who had already described the custom somewhat more

briefly in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> W. Crooke, *Natives of Northern India* (London, 1907), p. 202.

<sup>4</sup> E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> W. Crooke, *op. cit.* p. 202.



back the soul. They go to the bank of a river, call aloud the name of the deceased, and entering the water catch a fish or an insect. This creature they then take home and place among the sainted dead of the family, supposing that in this manner the spirit of the departed has been brought back to the house. Sometimes the fish or insect is eaten in the belief that it will be thus reborn as a child.<sup>1</sup> This last custom explains the widely diffused story of virgins who have conceived by eating of a plant or an animal or merely by taking it to their bosom.<sup>2</sup> In all such cases we may surmise that the plant or animal was thought to contain the soul of a dead person, which thus passed into the virgin's womb and was born again as an infant. Among the South Slavs childless women often resort to a grave in which a pregnant woman is buried. There they bite some grass from the grave, invoke the deceased by name, and beg her to give them the fruit of her womb. After that they take a little of the mould from the grave and carry it about with them thenceforth under their girdle.<sup>3</sup> Apparently they imagine that the soul of the unborn infant is in the grass or the mould and will pass from it into their body.

Stories of  
the Virgin  
Birth.

Reincarn-  
ation of  
the dead  
among  
the South  
Slavs.

Among the aborigines of Central Australia, the lowest savages of whom we have accurate accounts, beliefs of this sort are universal. They think that every person is the reincarnation of a deceased ancestor, and that the souls of

Reincarn-  
ation of  
the dead  
in Central  
Australia.

<sup>1</sup> R. V. Russell, in *Centur of India*, 1901, vol. xiii. (Central Provinces), part I. p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> For stories of such virgin births see Comte H. de Charency, *Le folklore dans les deux Mondes* (Paris, 1894), pp. 121-256; E. S. Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, vol. i. (London, 1894), pp. 71 sqq.; and my note on Pausanias vii. 17. 11 (vol. iv. pp. 138-140). To the instances there cited by me add: A. Thevet, *Cosmographie Universelle* (Paris, 1575), ii. 918 [wrongly numbered 952]; K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasiliens*, pp. 370, 373; H. A. Coudreau, *La France Équinoxiale*, ii. (Paris, 1887), pp. 184 sq.; *Relations des Jésuites*, 1637, pp. 123 sq. (Canadian reprint); A. G. Morice, *Au pays de l'Ours Noir* (Paris and

Lyons, 1897), p. 153; A. Raffray, "Voyage à la côte nord de la Nouvelle Guinée," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), VI<sup>e</sup> Série, xv. (1878), pp. 392 sq.; J. L. van der Toorn, "Het animisme bij den Minangkabauer der Padangsche Bovenlanden," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandisch-Indië*, xxxix. (1890), p. 78; E. Aymonier, "Les Tchames et leurs religions," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xxiv. (1901) pp. 215 sq.; Major P. R. T. Gordon, *The Kharis* (London, 1907), p. 195. In some stories the conception is brought about not by eating food but by drinking water. But the principle is the same.

<sup>3</sup> F. S. Krauss, *Sitte und Brauch der Süd-Slaven*, p. 531.



Reincarna-  
tion of the  
dead in  
Central  
Australia.

the dead pass directly into the wombs of women, who give them birth without the need of commerce with the other sex. They believe that the spirits of the departed gather and dwell at particular spots, marked by a natural feature such as a rock or a tree, and that from these lurking-places they dart out and enter the bodies of passing women or girls. When a woman feels her womb quickened, she knows that a spirit has made its way into her from the nearest abode of the dead. This is their regular explanation of conception and childbirth. "The natives, one and all in these tribes, believe that the child is the direct result of the entrance into the mother of an ancestral spirit individual. They have no idea of procreation as being associated with sexual intercourse, and firmly believe that children can be born without this taking place."<sup>1</sup> The spots where the souls thus congregate waiting to be born again are usually the places where the remote ancestors of the dream-time are said to have passed into the ground; that is, they are the places where the forefathers of the tribe are supposed to have died or to have been buried. For example, in the Warramunga tribe the ancestor of the Black-snake clan is said to have left many spirits of Black-snake children in the rocks and trees which border a certain creek. Hence no woman at the present day dares to strike one of these trees with an axe, being quite convinced that the blow would release one of the spirit-children, who would at once enter her body.<sup>2</sup> Again, at several places in the wide territory of the Arunta tribe there are certain stones which are in like manner thought to be the abode of souls awaiting rebirth. Hence the stones are called "child-stones." In one of them there is a hole through which the spirit-children look out for passing women, and it is firmly believed that a visit to the stone would result in conception. If a young woman is obliged to pass near the stone and does not wish to have a child, she will carefully disguise her youth, pulling a wry face and hobbling along on a stick. She will bend herself

<sup>1</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 330, compare *id. ibid.* pp. xi, 145, 147-151, 155 *sq.*, 161 *sq.*, 169 *sq.*, 173 *sq.*, 174-176, 606; *id.*, *Native Tribes*

*of Central Australia*, pp. 52, 123-125, 126, 132 *sq.*, 265, 335-338.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 162, 330 *sq.*

double like a very old woman, and imitating the cracked voice of age she will say, "Don't come to me, I am an old woman." Nay, it is thought that women may conceive by the stone without visiting it. If a man and his wife both wish for a child, the husband will tie his hair-girdle round the stone, rub it, and mutter a direction to the spirits to give heed to his wife. And it is believed that by performing a similar ceremony a malicious man can cause women and even children at a distance to be pregnant.<sup>1</sup>

### § 8. Sacred Stocks and Stones among the Semites

Traces of beliefs and customs like the foregoing may perhaps be detected among the ancient Semites. When the prophet Jeremiah speaks of the Israelites who said to a stock or to a tree (for in Hebrew the words are the same), "Thou art my father," and to a stone, "Thou hast brought me forth,"<sup>2</sup> it is probable that he was not using vague rhetorical language, but denouncing real beliefs current among his contemporaries. Now we know that at all the old Canaanite sanctuaries, including the sanctuaries of Jehovah down to the reformations of Hezekiah and Josiah, the two regular objects of worship were a sacred stock and a sacred stone,<sup>3</sup> and that these sanctuaries were the seats of profligate rites performed by sacred men (*kedeshim*) and sacred women (*kedeshoth*). Is it not natural to suppose that the stock and stone which the superstitious Israelites regarded as their father and mother were the sacred stock (*ashera*) and the sacred stone (*masseba*) of the sanctuary, and that the children born of the loose intercourse of the sexes at these places were believed to be the offspring or

Procreative  
virtue  
apparently  
ascribed to  
the sacred  
stocks and  
stones at  
Semitic  
sanctu-  
aries.

<sup>1</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 337 *sq.*

<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah ii. 27. The ancient Greeks seem also to have had a notion that men were sprung from trees or rocks. See Homer, *Od.* xix. 163; F. G. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, i. 777 *sqq.*; A. B. Cook, "Oak and Rock," *Classical Review*, xv. (1901) pp. 322 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> The *ashera* and the *masseba*. See 1 Kings xiv. 23; 2 Kings xviii. 4.

xxiii. 14; Micah v. 13 *sq.* (in Hebrew, 12 *sq.*); Deuteronomy xvi. 21 *sq.*; W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 187 *sqq.*, 203 *sqq.*; *Encyclopædia Biblica*, xv., "Asherah" and "Massebah." In the early religion of Crete also the two principal objects of worship seem to have been a sacred tree and a sacred pillar. See A. J. Evans, "Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxi. (1901) pp. 99 *sqq.*



emanations of these uncouth but worshipful idols in which, as in the sacred trees and stones of Central Australia, the souls of the dead may have been supposed to await rebirth? On this view the sacred men and women who actually begot or bore the children were deemed the human embodiments of the two divinities, the men perhaps personating the sacred stock, which appears to have been a tree stripped of its branches, and the women personating the sacred stone, which seems to have been in the shape of a cone, an obelisk, or a pillar.<sup>1</sup>

These conclusions confirmed by the excavation of a sanctuary at the Canaanitish city of Gezer.

These conclusions are confirmed by the result of recent researches at Gezer, an ancient Canaanitish city, which occupied a high, isolated point on the southern border of Ephraim, between Jerusalem and the sea. Here the English excavations have laid bare the remains of a sanctuary with the sacred stone pillars or obelisks (*masseboth*) still standing in a row, while between two of them is set a large socketed stone, beautifully squared, which perhaps contained the sacred stock or pole (*ashera*). In the soil which had accumulated over the floor of the temple were found vast numbers of male emblems rudely carved out of soft limestone; and tablets of terra-cotta, representing in low relief the mother-goddess, were discovered throughout the strata. These objects were no doubt votive-offerings presented by the worshippers to the male and female deities who were represented by the sacred stock and the sacred stones; and their occurrence in large quantities raises a strong presumption that the divinities of the sanctuary were a god and goddess regarded as above all sources of fertility. The supposition is further strengthened by a very remarkable discovery. Under the floor of the temple were found the bones of many new-born children, none more than a week old, buried in large jars. None of these little bodies showed any trace of mutilation or violence; and in the light of the customs

The infants buried in the sanctuary may have been expected to be born again.

<sup>1</sup> As to conical images of Semitic goddesses, see above, pp. 30 *sq.* The sacred pole (*ashera*) appears also to have been by some people regarded as the embodiment of a goddess (Astarte), not of a god. See above, p. 14, n. 6. Among the Khasis of Assam the sacred

upright stones, which resemble the Semitic *masseboth*, are regarded as males, and the flat table-stones as female. See P. R. T. Gordon, *The Khasis* (London, 1907), pp. 112 *sq.*, 150 *sqq.*



practised in many other lands<sup>1</sup> we seem to be justified in conjecturing that the infants were still-born or died soon after birth, and that they were buried by their parents in the sanctuary in the hope that, quickened by the divine power, they might enter again into the mother's womb and again be born into the world.<sup>2</sup> If the souls of these buried babes were supposed to pass into the sacred stocks and stones and to dart from them into the bodies of would-be mothers who resorted to the sanctuary, the analogy with Central Australia would be complete. That the analogy is real and not fanciful is strongly suggested by the modern practice of Syrian women who still repair to the shrines of saints to procure offspring, and who still look on "holy men" as human embodiments of divinity. In this, as in many other dark places of superstition, the present is the best guide to the interpretation of the past; for while the higher forms of religious faith pass away like clouds, the lower stand firm and indestructible like rocks. The "sacred men" of one age are the dervishes of the next, the Adonis of yesterday is the St. George of to-day.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 77 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> As to the excavations at Gezer, see R. A. Stewart Macalister, *Reports on the Excavation of Gezer*, pp. 76-89 (reprinted from the *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund*); *id.*, *Bible Side-lights from the Mound of Gezer* (London, 1906), pp. 57-67, 73-75. Mr. Macalister now inclines to regard the socketed stone as a laver rather than as the base of the sacred pole. He supposes that the buried infants were first-born children sacrificed in accordance with the ancient law of the dedication of the first-born. The explanation which I have adopted in the text agrees better with the uninjured state of the bodies, and it is further confirmed by the result of the Austrian excavations at Tell Ta'annek (Taanach) in Palestine, which seem to prove that there children up to the age of two years were not buried in the family graves but interred separately in jars. Some of these sepulchral jars were deposited under or beside the houses,

but many were grouped round a rock-hewn altar in a different part of the hill. There is nothing to indicate that any of the children were sacrificed: the size of some of the skeletons precludes the idea that they were slain at birth. Probably they all died natural deaths, and the custom of burying them in or near the house or beside an altar was intended to ensure their rebirth in the family. See Dr. E. Sellin, "Tell Ta'annek," *Denkschriften der Kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologisch-historische Klasse*, I (Vienna, 1904), No. iv. pp. 32-37, 96 *sq.* I have to thank Mr. R. A. Stewart Macalister for kindly directing my attention to the excavations at Tell Ta'annek (Taanach). It deserves to be mentioned that in an enclosure close to the standing stones at Gezer, there was found a bronze model of a cobra (R. A. Stewart Macalister, *Bible Side-lights*, p. 76). Perhaps the reptile was the deity of the shrine, or an embodiment of an ancestral spirit.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BURNING OF MELCARTH

Semitic custom of sacrificing a member of the royal family.

IF a custom of putting a king or his son to death in the character of a god has left small traces of itself in Cyprus, an island where the fierce zeal of Semitic religion was early tempered by Greek humanity, the vestiges of that gloomy rite are clearer in Phœnicia itself and in the Phœnician colonies, which lay more remote from the highways of Grecian commerce. We know that the Semites were in the habit of sacrificing some of their children, generally the first-born, either as a tribute regularly due to the deity or to appease his anger in seasons of public danger and calamity.<sup>1</sup> If commoners did so, is it likely that kings, with all their heavy responsibilities, could exempt themselves from this dreadful sacrifice for the fatherland? In point of fact, history informs us that kings steeled themselves to do as others did.<sup>2</sup> It deserves to be noticed that if Mesha, king of Moab, who sacrificed his eldest son by fire, claimed to be a son of his god,<sup>3</sup> he would no doubt transmit his divinity to his offspring; and further, that the same sacrifice is said to have been performed in the same way by the divine founder of Byblus, the great seat of the worship of Adonis.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that the human representatives of Adonis formerly perished in the flames. At all events, a custom of periodically burning the chief god of the city in effigy appears to have prevailed

The burning of Melcarth at Tyre.

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 38 sqq. See Appendix I., "Moloch the King," at the end of this volume.

<sup>2</sup> Philo of Byblus, quoted by Eusebius, *Præpar. Evang.* i. 10. 29 sq.; 2 Kings iii. 27.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Philo of Byblus, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. pp. 569, 570, 571. See above, p. 10.



at Tyre and in the Tyrian colonies down to a late time, and the effigy may well have been a later substitute for a man. For Melcarth, the great god of Tyre, was identified by the Greeks with Hercules,<sup>1</sup> who is said to have burned himself to death on a great pyre, ascending up to heaven in a cloud and a peal of thunder.<sup>2</sup> The common Greek legend, immortalised by Sophocles, laid the scene of the fiery tragedy on the top of Mount Oeta, but another version transferred it significantly to Tyre itself.<sup>3</sup> Combined with the other evidence which I shall adduce, this latter tradition raises a strong presumption that an effigy of Hercules, or rather of Melcarth, was regularly burned at a great festival in Tyre. That festival may have been the one known as "the awakening of Hercules," which was held in the month of Peritius, answering nearly to January.<sup>4</sup> The name of the festival suggests that the dramatic representation of the death of the god on the pyre was followed by a semblance of his resurrection. The mode in which the resurrection was supposed to be effected is perhaps indicated by the statement of a Greek writer that the Phoenicians used to sacrifice quails to Hercules, because Hercules on his journey to Libya had been slain by Typhon and brought to life again by Iolaus, who held a quail under his nose: the dead god snuffed at the bird and revived.<sup>5</sup> Such a festival might appropriately be held in spring, when the quails migrate northwards across the Mediterranean in great bands, and immense numbers of them are netted for the market.<sup>6</sup> In the month of March the birds return to Palestine by myriads

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Sophocles, *Trachiniae*, 1191 sqq.; Apollodorus, ii. 7. 7; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 38; Hyginus, *Fab.* 36.

<sup>3</sup> [S. Clementis Romani,] *Recognitiones*, x. 24, p. 233, ed. E. G. Gersdorf (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, i. 1434).

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *Antiquit. Jud.* viii. 5. 3. *Contra Apionem*, i. 18. Whether the quadriennial festival of Hercules at Tyre (2 Maccabees iv. 18-20) was a different celebration, or only "the awakening of Melcarth" celebrated with unusual pomp once in four years, we do not know.

<sup>5</sup> Eudoxus of Cnidus, quoted by Athenaeus, ix. 47, p. 392 D E. That the death and resurrection of Melcarth were celebrated in an annual festival at Tyre has been recognised by scholars. See Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 25 sqq.; H. Hubert et M. Mauss, "Essai sur le sacrifice," *L'Année Sociologique*, ii. (1899) pp. 122, 124; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 308-311.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Newton, *Dictionary of Birds* (London, 1893-96), p. 755.



in a single night, and remain to breed in all the open plains, marshes, and cornfields.<sup>1</sup> Certainly a close connection seems to have subsisted between quails and Melcarth; for legend ran that Asteria, the mother of the Tyrian Hercules, that is, of Melcarth, was transformed into a quail.<sup>2</sup> It was probably to this annual festival of the death and resurrection of Melcarth that the Carthaginians were wont to send ambassadors every year to Tyre, their mother-city.<sup>3</sup>

Worship of Melcarth at Gades, and trace of a custom of burning him there in effigy.

In Gades, the modern Cadiz, an early colony of Tyre on the Atlantic coast of Spain,<sup>4</sup> there was an ancient, famous, and wealthy sanctuary of Hercules, the Tyrian Melcarth. Indeed the god was said to be buried on the spot. No image stood in his temple, but a perpetual fire burned on the altar, and incense was offered by white-robed priests, with bare feet and shorn heads, who were bound to chastity. Neither women nor pigs might pollute the holy place by their presence. In later times many distinguished Romans went on pilgrimage to this remote shrine on the Atlantic shore when they were about to embark on some perilous enterprise, and they returned to it to pay their vows when their petitions had been granted.<sup>5</sup> One of the last things Hannibal himself did before he marched on Italy was to

<sup>1</sup> H. B. Tristram, *The Fauna and Flora of Palestine* (London, 1884), p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> The Tyrian Hercules was said to be a son of Zeus and Asteria (Eudoxus of Cnidus, quoted by Athenaeus, ix. 47, p. 392 D; Cicero, *De natura deorum*, iii. 16. 42). As to the transformation of Asteria into a quail see Apollodorus, i. 4. 1; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 401; Hyginus, *Fab.* 53; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* iii. 73. Quails were perhaps burned in honour of the Cilician Hercules or Sandan at Tarsus. See below, p. 99, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Quintus Curtius, iv. 2. 10; Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 24. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, iii. 5. 5, pp. 169 sq.; Mela, iii. 46; Scymnus Chius, *Orbis Descriptio*, 159-161 (*Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, i. 200 sq.).

<sup>5</sup> Silius Italicus, iii. 14-32; Mela, iii. 46; Strabo, iii. 5. 3, 5, 7, pp. 169, 170, 172; Diodorus Siculus, v.

20. 2; Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, v. 4 sq.; Appian, *Hispanica*, 65. Compare Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 16. 4. That the bones of Hercules were buried at Gades is mentioned by Mela (*l.c.*). Compare Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, i. 36. In Italy women were not allowed to participate in sacrifices offered to Hercules (Aulus Gellius, xi. 6. 2; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 12. 28; Sextus Aurelius Victor, *De origine gentis Romanae*, vi. 6; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 60). Whether the priests of Melcarth at Gades were celibate, or had only to observe continence at certain seasons, does not appear. At Tyre the priest of Melcarth might be married (Justin, xviii. 4. 5). The worship of Melcarth under the name of Hercules continued to flourish in the south of Spain down to the time of the Roman Empire. See J. Tontain, *Les Cultes païens dans l'Empire Romain*, Première Partie, i. (Paris, 1907) pp. 400 sqq.

repair to Gades and offer up to Melcarth prayers which were never to be answered. Soon after he dreamed an ominous dream.<sup>1</sup> Now it would appear that at Gades, as at Tyre, though no image of Melcarth stood in the temple, an effigy of him was made up and burned at a yearly festival. For a certain Cleon of Magnesia related how, visiting Gades, he was obliged to sail away from the island with the rest of the multitude in obedience to the command of Hercules, that is, of Melcarth, and how on their return they found a monstrous man of the sea stranded on the beach and burning; for the god, they were told, had struck him with a thunderbolt.<sup>2</sup> We may conjecture that at the annual festival of Melcarth strangers were obliged to quit the city, and that in their absence the mystery of burning the god was consummated. What Cleon and the rest saw on their return to Gades would, on this hypothesis, be the smouldering remains of a gigantic effigy of Melcarth in the likeness of a man riding on a sea-horse, just as he is represented on coins of Tyre.<sup>3</sup> In like manner the Greeks portrayed the sea-god Melicertes, whose name is only a slightly altered form of Melcarth, riding on a dolphin or stretched on the beast's back.<sup>4</sup>

At Carthage, the greatest of the Tyrian colonies, a reminiscence of the custom of burning a deity in effigy seems to linger in the story that Dido or Elissa, the foundress and queen of the city, stabbed herself to death upon a pyre, or leaped from her palace into the blazing pile, to escape the fond importunities of one lover or in despair at the cruel desertion of another.<sup>5</sup> We are told that Dido

Evidence of a custom of burning a god or goddess at Carthage.

<sup>1</sup> Livy, xxi. 21. 9, 22. 5-9; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, i. 24. 49; Silius Italicus, iii. 1 sqq., 158 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, x. 4. 5.

<sup>3</sup> B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 674; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 351.

<sup>4</sup> F. Imhoof-Blumer and P. Gardner, *Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias*, pp. 10-12, with pl. A; Stoll, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2634.

<sup>5</sup> Justin, xviii. 6. 1-7; Virgil, *Aen.* iv. 473 sqq., v. l. 1 sqq.; Ovid, *Fasti*, iii. 545 sqq.; Timaeus, in *Fragmenta*

*Historiarum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, i. 197. Compare W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 373 sqq. The name of Dido has been plausibly derived by Gesenius, Movers, E. Meyer, and A. H. Sayce from the Semitic *ddid*, "beloved." See F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 616; W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon d. griech. und röm. Mythologie*, i. 1017 sq.; A. H. Sayce, *Lectures on the Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, pp. 56 sqq. If they are right, the divine character of Dido becomes more probable than ever, since "the Beloved" (*Dodsh*) seems to have been a title of a



was worshipped as a goddess at Carthage so long as the country maintained its independence.<sup>1</sup> Her temple stood in the centre of the city shaded by a grove of solemn yews and firs.<sup>2</sup> The two apparently contradictory views of her character as a queen and a goddess may be reconciled if we suppose that she was both the one and the other; that in fact the queen of Carthage in early days, like the queen of Egypt down to historical times, was regarded as divine, and had, like human deities elsewhere, to die a violent death either at the end of a fixed period or whenever her bodily and mental powers began to fail. In later ages the stern old custom might be softened down into a pretence by substituting an effigy for the queen or by allowing her to pass through the fire unscathed. A similar modification of the ancient rule appears to have been allowed at Tyre itself, the mother-city of Carthage. We have seen reason to think that the kings of Tyre, from whom Dido was descended, claimed to personate the god Melcarth, and that the deity was burned either in effigy or in the person of a man at an annual festival.<sup>3</sup> Now in the same chapter in which Ezekiel charges the king of Tyre with claiming to be a god, the prophet describes him as walking "up and down amidst the stones of fire."<sup>4</sup> The description becomes at once intelligible if we suppose that in later times the king of Tyre compounded for being burnt in the fire by walking up and down on hot stones, thereby saving his life at the expense perhaps of a few blisters on his feet. It is possible that when all went well with the commonwealth, children whom strict law doomed to the furnace of Moloch may also have been mercifully allowed to escape on condition of running the fiery gauntlet. At all events, a religious rite of this sort has been and is still practised in many parts of the world: the performers solemnly pace through a furnace of heated stones or glowing wood-ashes in the presence of a multitude of spectators. Examples of the custom could be multiplied.<sup>5</sup>

Semitic goddess, perhaps Astarte. See above, p. 17, note 1. According to Varro it was not Dido but her sister Anna who slew herself on a pyre for love of Aeneas (Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* iv. 682).

<sup>1</sup> Justin, xviii. 6, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Silius Italicus, i. 81 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 13, 84 *sqq.*

<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel xxviii. 14, compare 16.

<sup>5</sup> A. Lang, *Modern Mythology*, pp. 148 *sqq.*; *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii.



Here I will cite only one. At Castabala, in Southern Cappadocia, there was worshipped an Asiatic goddess whom the Greeks called the Perasian Artemis. Her priestesses used to walk barefoot over a fire of charcoal without sustaining any injury. That this rite was a substitute for burning human beings alive or dead is suggested by the tradition which placed the adventure of Orestes and the Tauric Artemis at Castabala;<sup>1</sup> for the men or women sacrificed to the Tauric Artemis were first put to the sword and then burned in a pit of sacred fire.<sup>2</sup> Among the Carthaginians another trace of such a practice may perhaps be detected in the story that at the desperate battle of Himera, fought from dawn of day till late in the evening, the Carthaginian king Hamilcar remained in the camp and kept sacrificing holocausts of victims on a huge pyre; but when he saw his army giving way before the Greeks, he flung himself into the flames and was burned to death. Afterwards his countrymen sacrificed to him and erected a great monument in his honour at Carthage, while lesser monuments were reared to his memory in all the Punic colonies.<sup>3</sup> In public emergencies which called for extraordinary measures a king

The fire-walk at Castabala.

The Carthaginian king Hamilcar sacrifices himself in the fire.

306 sq.; E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* (Madras, 1906), pp. 471-486.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 2. 7, p. 537. In Greece itself accused persons used to prove their innocence by walking through fire (Sophocles, *Antigone*, 264 sq., with Jebb's note). Possibly the fire-walk of the priestesses at Castabala was designed to test their chastity. For this purpose the priests and priestesses of the Tshi-speaking people of the Gold Coast submit to an ordeal, standing one by one in a narrow circle of fire. This "is supposed to show whether they have remained pure, and refrained from sexual intercourse, during the period of retirement, and so are worthy of inspiration by the gods. If they are pure they will receive no injury and suffer no pain from the fire" (A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, p. 138).

<sup>2</sup> Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 621-626. Compare Diodorus Siculus, xx. 14-6.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, vii. 167. This was the Carthaginian version of the story. According to another account, Hamilcar was killed by the Greek cavalry (Diodorus Siculus, xi. 22. 1). His worship at Carthage is mentioned by Athenagoras (*Supplicatio pro Christianis*, p. 64, ed. J. C. T. Otto). I have called Hamilcar a king in accordance with the usage of Greek writers (Herodotus, vii. 165 sq.; Aristotle, *Politics*, ii. 11; Polybius, vi. 51; Diodorus Siculus, xiv. 54. 5). But the *suffetes*, or supreme magistrates, of Carthage were two in number; whether they were elected for a year or for life seems to be doubtful. Cornelius Nepos, who calls them kings, says that they were elected annually (*Hannibal*, vii. 4), and Livy (xxx. 7. 5) compares them to the consuls; but Cicero (*De re publica*, ii. 23. 42 sq.) seems to imply that they held office for life. See G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, pp. 115 sq.

of Carthage may well have felt bound in honour to sacrifice himself in the old way for the good of his country: That the Carthaginians regarded the death of Hamilcar as an act of heroism and not as a mere suicide of despair, is proved by the posthumous honours they paid him.

The foregoing evidence, taken altogether, raises a strong presumption, though it cannot be said to amount to a proof, that a practice of burning a deity, and especially Melcarth, in effigy or in the person of a human representative, was observed at an annual festival in Tyre and its colonies. We can thus understand how Hercules, in so far as he represented the Tyrian god, was believed to have perished by a voluntary death on a pyre. For on many a beach and headland of the Aegean, where the Phœnicians had their trading factories, the Greeks may have watched the bale-fires of Melcarth blazing in the darkness of night, and have learned with wonder that the strange foreign folk were burning their god. In this way the legend of the voyages of Hercules and his death in the flames may be supposed to have originated. Yet with the legend the Greeks borrowed the custom of burning the god; for at the festivals of Hercules a pyre used to be kindled in memory of the hero's fiery death on Mount Oeta.<sup>1</sup> We may suppose, though we are not expressly told, that an effigy of Hercules was regularly burned on the pyre.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *Amores*, 1 and 54.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE BURNING OF SANDAN

#### § 1. *The Baal of Tarsus*

IN Cyprus the Tyrian Melcarth was worshipped side by side with Adonis at Amathus,<sup>1</sup> and Phœnician inscriptions prove that he was revered also at Idalium and Larnax Lapethus. At the last of these places he seems to have been regarded by the Greeks as a marine deity and identified with Poseidon.<sup>2</sup> A remarkable statue found at Amathus may represent Melcarth in the character of the lion-slayer, a character which the Greeks bestowed on Hercules. The statue in question is of colossal size, and exhibits a thick-set, muscular, hirsute deity of almost bestial aspect, with goggle eyes, huge ears, and a pair of stumpy horns on the top of his head. His beard is square and curly: his hair falls in three pigtails on his shoulders: his brawny arms appear to be tattooed. A lion's skin, clasped by a buckle, is knotted round his loins; and he holds the skin of a lioness in front of him, grasping a hind paw with each hand, while the head of the beast, which is missing, hangs down between his legs. A fountain must have issued from the jaws of the lioness, for a rectangular hole, where the beast's head should be, communicates by a channel with another hole in the back of the statue. Greek artists working on this or a similar barbarous model produced the refined type of the Grecian Hercules with the lion's scalp thrown like a cowl over his head. Statues of him have been found in Cyprus,

The Tyrian  
Melcarth  
in Cyprus.

The lion-  
slaying  
god.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 28.

*Semitic Inscriptions*, Nos. 23 and 29,  
pp. 73, 83 *sq.*, with the notes on pp.  
81, 84.

<sup>2</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-*

which represent intermediate stages in this artistic evolution.<sup>1</sup> But there is no proof that in Cyprus the Tyrian Melcarth was burned either in effigy or in the person of a human representative.<sup>2</sup>

The Baal of Tarsus, an Oriental god of corn and grapes.

On the other hand, there is clear evidence of the observance of such a custom in Cilicia, the country which lies across the sea from Cyprus, and from which the worship of Adonis, according to tradition, was derived.<sup>3</sup> Whether the Phoenicians ever colonised Cilicia or not is doubtful,<sup>4</sup> but at all events the natives of the country, down to late times, worshipped a male deity who, in spite of a superficial assimilation to a fashionable Greek god, appears to have been an Oriental by birth and character. He had his principal seat at Tarsus, in a plain of luxuriant fertility and almost tropical climate, tempered by breezes from the snowy range of Taurus on the north and from the sea on the south.<sup>5</sup> Though Tarsus boasted of a school of Greek philosophy which at the beginning of our era surpassed those of Athens and Alexandria,<sup>6</sup> the city apparently remained in manners and spirit essentially Oriental. The women went about the streets muffled up to the eyes in Eastern fashion, and Dio Chrysostom reproaches the natives with resembling the most dissolute of the Phoenicians rather than the Greeks whose civilisation they aped.<sup>7</sup> On the coins of the city

<sup>1</sup> Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iii. 566-578. The colossal statue found at Amathus may be related, directly or indirectly, to the Egyptian god Bes, who is represented as a sturdy misshapen dwarf, wearing round his body the skin of a beast of the panther tribe, with its tail hanging down. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 284 sqq.; A. Furtwängler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. 2143 sq.

<sup>2</sup> However, human victims were burned at Salamis in Cyprus. See below, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> For traces of Phoenician influence in Cilicia see F. C. Movers, *Die*

*Phoenizier*, ii. 2, pp. 167-174, 207 sqq. Herodotus says (vii. 91) that the Cilicians were named after Cilix, a son of the Phoenician Agenor.

<sup>5</sup> As to the fertility and the climate of the plain of Tarsus, which is now very malarious, see E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey* (London, 1879), chaps. i.-vii. The gardens for miles round the city are very lovely, but wild and neglected, full of magnificent trees, especially fine oak, ash, orange, and lemon-trees. The vines run to the top of the highest branches, and almost every garden resounds with the song of the nightingale (E. J. Davis, *op. cit.* p. 35).

<sup>6</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 13, pp. 673 sq.

<sup>7</sup> Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* xxxiii. vol. ii. pp. 14 sq., 17, ed. L. Dindorf.



they assimilated their native deity to Zeus by representing him seated on a throne, the upper part of his body bare, the lower limbs draped in a flowing robe, while in one hand he holds a sceptre, which is topped sometimes with an eagle but often with a lotus flower. Yet his foreign nature is indicated both by his name and his attributes; for in Aramaic inscriptions on the coins he bears the name of the Baal of Tarsus, and in one hand he grasps an ear of corn and a bunch of grapes.<sup>1</sup> These attributes clearly mark him out as a god of fertility in general, who conferred on his worshippers the two things which they prized above all other gifts of nature, the corn and the wine. He was probably therefore a Semitic, or at all events an Oriental, rather than a Greek deity. For while the Semite cast all his gods more or less in the same mould, and expected them all to render him nearly the same services, the Greek, with his keener intelligence and more pictorial imagination, invested his deities with individual characteristics, allotting to each of them his or her separate function in the divine economy of the world. Thus he assigned the production of the corn to Demeter, and that of the grapes to Dionysus; he was not so unreasonable as to demand both from the same hard-worked deity.

## § 2. *The God of Ibreez*

Now the suspicion that the Baal of Tarsus, for all his posing in the attitude of Zeus, was really an Oriental is confirmed by a remarkable rock-hewn monument which is to be seen at Ibreez in Southern Cappadocia. Though the place is distant little more than fifty miles from Tarsus as the crow flies, yet the journey on horseback occupies five days; for the great barrier of the Taurus mountains rises

The Baal of Tarsus has his counterpart at Ibreez in Cappadocia.

<sup>1</sup> F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, ii. 2, pp. 171 sq.; P. Gardner, *Types of Greek Coins*, pl. x. Nos. 29, 30; B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 614; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of Greek Coins of Lycania, Isauria, and Cilicia* (London, 1900), pp. 167-176, pl. xxix.-xxxii.; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the*

*Hunterian Collection*, ii. (Glasgow, 1901) p. 547; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 727. In later times, from about 175 B.C. onward, the Baal of Tarsus was completely assimilated to Zeus on the coins. See B. V. Head, *op. cit.* p. 617; G. F. Hill, *op. cit.* pp. 177, 181.

like a wall between. The road runs through the famous pass of the Cilician Gates, and the scenery throughout is of the grandest Alpine character. On all sides the mountains tower skyward, their peaks sheeted in a dazzling pall of snow, their lower slopes veiled in the almost inky blackness of dense pine-forests, torn here and there by impassable ravines, or broken into prodigious precipices of red and grey rock which border the narrow valley for miles. The magnificence of the landscape is enhanced by the exhilarating influence of the brisk mountain air, all the more by contrast with the sultry heat of the plain of Tarsus which the traveller has left behind.

The rock-sculptures at Ibreez represent a god of corn and grapes adored by his worshipper, a priest or king.

The village of Ibreez is charmingly situated at the northern foot of the Taurus, some six or seven miles south of the town of Eregli, the ancient Cybistra. From the town to the village the path goes through a richly cultivated district of wheat and vines along green lanes more lovely than those of Devonshire, lined by thick hedges and rows of willow, poplar, hazel, hawthorn, and huge old walnut-trees, where in early summer the nightingales warble on every side. Ibreez itself is embowered in the verdure of orchards, walnuts, and vines. It stands at the mouth of a deep ravine enclosed by great precipices of red rock. From the western of these precipices a river clear as crystal, but of a deep blue tint, bursts in a powerful jet, and being reinforced by a multitude of springs becomes at once a raging impassable torrent foaming and leaping over the rocks in its bed. A little way from the source a branch of the main stream flows in a deep narrow channel along the foot of a reddish weather-stained rock which rises sheer from the water. On its face, which has been smoothed to receive them, are the sculptures. They consist of two colossal figures, representing a god adored by his worshipper. The deity, some twenty feet high, is a bearded male figure, wearing on his head a high pointed cap adorned with several pairs of horns, and clad in a short tunic, which does not reach his knees and is drawn in at the waist by a belt. His legs and arms are bare; the wrists are encircled by bangles or bracelets. His feet are shod in high boots with turned-up toes. In his right hand he holds a vine-branch



laden with clusters of grapes, and in his raised left hand he grasps a bunch of bearded wheat, such as is still grown in Cappadocia; the ears of corn project above his fingers, while the long stalks hang down to his feet. In front of him stands the lesser figure, some twelve feet high. He is clearly a priest or king, more probably perhaps both in one. His rich vestments contrast with the simple costume of the god. On his head he wears a round but not pointed cap, encircled by flat bands and ornamented in front with a rosette or bunch of jewels, such as is still worn by Eastern princes. He is draped from the neck to the ankles in a long robe heavily fringed at the bottom, over which is thrown a shawl or mantle secured at the breast by a clasp of precious stones. Both robe and shawl are elaborately carved with patterns in imitation of embroidery. A heavy necklace of rings or beads encircles the neck; a bracelet or bangle clasps the one wrist that is visible; the feet are shod in boots like those of the god. One or perhaps both hands are raised in the act of adoration. The large aquiline nose, like the beak of a hawk, is a conspicuous feature in the face both of the god and of his worshipper; the hair and beard of both are thick and curly.<sup>1</sup>

The situation of this remarkable monument resembles that of Aphaca on the Lebanon;<sup>2</sup> for in both places we see a noble river issuing abruptly from the rock to spread fertility through the rich vale below. Nowhere, perhaps, could man more appropriately revere those great powers of nature to whose favour he ascribes the fruitfulness of the earth, and through it the life of animate creation. With its cool bracing air, its mass of verdure, its magnificent stream of

The fertility of Ibreez contrasted with the desolation of the surrounding country.

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Davis, "On a New Hamathite Inscription at Ibreez," *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, iv. (1876) pp. 336-346; *id.*, *Life in Asiatic Turkey* (London, 1879), pp. 245-260; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 723-729; Ramsay and Hogarth, "Prehellenic Monuments of Cappadocia," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xiv. (1903) pp. 77-81, 85 *sq.*, with plates iii. and iv.; L.

Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hethiticarum* (Berlin, 1900), Tafel xxxiv. Of this sculptured group Messrs. W. M. Ramsay and D. G. Hogarth say that "it yields to no rock-relief in the world in impressive character" (*American Journal of Archaeology*, vi. (1890) p. 347). For the route from Tarsus to Ibreez (Ivriz) see E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, pp. 198-244.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 23 *sqq.*

pure ice-cold water—so grateful in the burning heat of summer—and its wide stretch of fertile land, the valley may well have been the residence of an ancient prince or high-priest, who desired to testify by this monument his devotion and gratitude to the god. The seat of this royal or priestly potentate may have been at Cybistra,<sup>1</sup> the modern Eregli, now a decayed and miserable place straggling amid orchards and gardens full of luxuriant groves of walnut, poplar, willow, mulberry, and oak. The place is a paradise of birds. Here the thrush and the nightingale sing full-throated, the hoopoe waves his crested top-knot, the bright-hued woodpeckers flit from bough to bough, and the swifts dart screaming by hundreds through the air. Yet a little way off, beyond the beneficent influence of the springs and streams, all is desolation—in summer an arid waste broken by great marshes and wide patches of salt, in winter a broad sheet of stagnant water, which as it dries up with the growing heat of the sun exhales a poisonous malaria. To the west, as far as the eye can see, stretches the endless expanse of the dreary Lycaonian plain, barren, treeless, and solitary, till it fades into the blue distance, or is bounded afar off by abrupt ranges of jagged volcanic mountains, on which in sunshiny weather the shadows of the clouds rest, purple and soft as velvet.<sup>2</sup> No wonder that the smiling luxuriance of the one landscape, sharply contrasting with the bleak sterility of the other, should have rendered it in the eyes of primitive man a veritable garden of God.

Among the attributes which mark out the deity of Ibreez as a power of fertility the horns on his high cap should not be overlooked. They are probably the horns of a bull; for to primitive cattle-breeders the bull is the most natural emblem of generative force. At Carchemish, the great Hittite capital on the Euphrates, a relief has been discovered which represents a god or a priest clad in a rich robe, and wearing on his head a tall horned cap surmounted by a disc.<sup>3</sup> Sculptures found at the palace of Euyuk in North-

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xii. 2. 7, p. 537.

<sup>2</sup> E. J. Davis in *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, iv. (1876) pp. 336 sq., 346; *id.*, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, pp. 232 sq., 236 sq.

264 sq., 270-272. Compare W. J. Hamilton, *Remarks in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, ii. 304-307.

<sup>3</sup> L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites* (London, 1903), pp. 49 sq. On an



western Cappadocia prove that the Hittites worshipped the bull and sacrificed rams to it.<sup>1</sup> Similarly the Greeks conceived the vine-god Dionysus in the form of a bull.<sup>2</sup>

### § 3. *Sandan of Tarsus*

That the god of Ibreez, with the grapes and corn in his hands, is identical with the Baal of Tarsus, who bears the same emblems, may be taken as certain.<sup>3</sup> But what was his name? and who were his worshippers? The Greeks apparently called him Hercules; at least in Byzantine times the neighbouring town of Cybistra adopted the name of Heraclea, which seems to show that Hercules was deemed the principal deity of the place.<sup>4</sup> Yet the style and costume of the figures at Ibreez prove unquestionably that the god was an Oriental. If any confirmation of this view were needed, it is furnished by the inscriptions carved on the rock beside the sculptures, for these inscriptions are composed in the peculiar system of hieroglyphics now known as Hittite. It follows, therefore, that the deity worshipped at Tarsus and Ibreez was a god of the Hittites, that ancient and little-known people who occupied the centre of Asia Minor, invented a system of writing, and extended their influence, if not their dominion, at one time from the Euphrates to the Aegean. From the lofty and arid tablelands of the interior, a prolongation of the great plateau of Central Asia, with a climate ranging from the most burning heat in summer to the most piercing cold in winter,<sup>5</sup> these hardy highlanders seem to have swept down through the

The god of Ibreez a Hittite deity.

Assyrian cylinder, now in the British Museum, we see a warlike deity with bow and arrows standing on a lion, and wearing a similar bonnet decorated with horns and surmounted by a star or sun. See De Vogüé, *Mélanges d'Archéologie Orientale* (Paris, 1868), p. 46, who interprets the deity as the great Asiatic goddess.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 164 sq.; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 432 sqq., 537.

<sup>3</sup> The identification is accepted by

E. Meyer (*Geschichte der Alterthümer*, i. pp. 305, 309), Perrot et Chipiez (*Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 727), and P. Jensen (*Hittiter und Armenier*, p. 145).

<sup>4</sup> Ramsay and Hogarth, "Pre-Hellenic Monuments of Cappadocia," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xiv. (1893) p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 360-362; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 572 sqq., 586 sq.

mountain-passes and established themselves at a very early date in the rich southern lowlands of Syria and Cilicia.<sup>1</sup> Their language and race are still under discussion, but a great preponderance of opinion appears to declare that neither the one nor the other was Semitic.<sup>2</sup>

The  
burning of  
Sandan or  
Hercules  
at Tarsus.

In the inscription attached to the colossal figure of the god at Ibreez two scholars have professed to read the name of Sandan or Sanda.<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, there are independent grounds for thinking that Sandan, Sandon, or Sandes may have been the name of the Cappadocian and Cilician god of fertility. For the god of Ibreez in Cappadocia appears, as we saw, to have been identified by the Greeks with Hercules, and we are told that a Cappadocian and Cilician name of Hercules was Sandan or Sandes.<sup>4</sup> Now this Sandan or Hercules is said to have founded Tarsus, and the people of the city commemorated him at

<sup>1</sup> That the cradle of the Hittites was in the interior of Asia Minor, particularly in Cappadocia, and that they spread from there south, east, and west, is the view of A. H. Sayce, W. M. Ramsay, D. G. Hogarth, W. Max Müller, F. Hommel, L. B. Paton, and L. Messerschmidt. See *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement for 1884*, p. 49; A. H. Sayce, *The Hittites* (London, 1903), pp. 80 *sqq.*; W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa* (Leipzig, 1893), pp. 319 *sqq.*; *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie*, xv. (1893) p. 94; F. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients*, pp. 42, 48, 54; L. B. Paton, *The Early History of Syria and Palestine* (London, 1902), pp. 103 *sqq.*; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites* (London, 1903), pp. 12, 13, 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 351, note 3, with his references; L. B. Paton, *op. cit.* p. 109; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, p. 10; F. Hommel, *op. cit.* p. 42; W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, p. 332.

<sup>3</sup> A. H. Sayce, "The Hittite Inscriptions," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xiv. (1893) pp. 48 *sq.*; P. Jensen, *Hittiter und*

*Armenier* (Strasburg, 1898), pp. 42 *sq.*

<sup>4</sup> Syncellus, *Chronographia*, vol. i. p. 290, ed. G. Dindorf: Ἡρακλῆα τινὲς φασὶν ἐν Φοινίκῃ γνηρίσθαι Σάνδαν ἐπιτεργόμενον, ὡς καὶ μετὰ τὸν ὄπῳ Καππαδόκιον καὶ Κιλικίον. In this passage Σάνδαν is a correction of F. C. Movers's (*Die Phoenizier*, i. 460) for the MS. reading Διωνάδαν, the ΔΙ having apparently arisen by dittography from the preceding ΑΙ; and Κιλικίον is a correction of E. Meyer's (*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xxxi. 737) for the MS. reading Ἰλίων. Compare Jerome (quoted by Movers and Meyer *l.c.*): *Hercules cognomento Deianaus in Syria Phoenice clarus habetur. Inde ad nostram usque memoriam a Cappadocibus et Eliensibus (al. Delis) Deianaus adhuc dicitur*. If the text of Jerome is here sound, he would seem to have had before him a Greek original which was corrupt like the text of Syncellus or of Syncellus's authority. The Cilician Hercules is called Sandes by Nonnus (*Dionys.* xxxiv. 183 *sq.*). Compare Raoul-Rochette in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 159 *sqq.*



an annual or, at all events, periodical festival by erecting a fine pyre in his honour.<sup>1</sup> Apparently at this festival, as at the festival of Melcarth, the god was burned in effigy on his own pyre. For coins of Tarsus often exhibit the pyre as a conical structure resting on a garlanded altar or basis, with the figure of Sandan himself in the midst of it, while an eagle with spread wings perches on the top of the pyre, as if about to bear the soul of the burning god in the pillar of smoke and fire to heaven.<sup>2</sup> In like manner when a Roman emperor died leaving a son to succeed him on the throne, a waxen effigy was made in the likeness of the deceased and burned on a huge pyramidal pyre, which was reared upon a square basis of wood; and from the summit of the blazing pile an eagle was released for the purpose of carrying to heaven the soul of the dead and deified emperor.<sup>3</sup> The Romans may have borrowed from the East a grandiose custom which savours of Oriental adulation rather than of Roman simplicity.

<sup>1</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, xiv. 8. 3; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* xxxiii. vol. ii. p. 16, ed. L. Dindorf. The pyre is mentioned only by Dio Chrysostom, whose words clearly imply that its erection was a custom observed periodically. On Sandan or Sandon see K. O. Müller, "Sandon und Sardana-pal," *Kunstarchaeologische Werke*, iii. 6 sqq.; F. C. Movers, *Die Phoenizier*, i. 458 sqq.; Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 178 sqq.; E. Meyer, "Ueber einige Semitische Götter," *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xxxi. (1877) pp. 736-740.

<sup>2</sup> P. Gardner, *Catalogue of Greek Coins, the Seleucid Kings of Syria*, pp. 72, 78, 89, 112, pl. xxi. 6, xxiv. 3, xxviii. 8; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycania, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. 180, 181, 183, 190, 221, 224, 225, pl. xxxiii. 2, 3, xxxiv. 10, xxxvii. 9; *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) pl. xiii. 1, 2. The structure represented on the coins is sometimes called not the pyre but the monument of Sandan. Certainly the

cone resting on the square base reminds us of the similar structure on the coins of Byblus as well as of the conical image of Aphrodite at Paphos (see above, pp. 11, 30 sq.); but the words of Dio Chrysostom make it probable that the design on the coins of Tarsus represents the pyre. At the same time, the burning of the god may well have been sculptured on a permanent monument of stone. The legend OPTTIOGHRA, literally "quail-hunt," which appears on some coins of Tarsus (G. F. Hill, *op. cit.* pp. lxxxvi. sq.), may refer to a custom of catching quails and burning them on the pyre. This explanation of the legend was suggested by Raoul-Rochette (*op. cit.* pp. 201-205). See above, p. 85. However, Mr. G. F. Hill writes to me that "the interpretation of *Ὀπτιοθήρα* as anything but a personal name is rendered very unlikely by the analogy of all the other inscriptions on coins of the same class." Doves were burnt on a pyre in honour of Adonis (below, p. 114). Similarly birds were burnt on a pyre in honour of Laphrian Artemis at Patrae (Pausanias, vii. 18. 12).

<sup>3</sup> Herodian, iv. 2.

Sandan of Tarsus an Asiatic god with the symbols of the lion and the double axe.

The type of Sandan or Hercules, as he is portrayed on the coins of Tarsus, is that of an Asiatic deity standing on a lion. It is thus that he is represented on the pyre, and it is thus that he appears as a separate figure without the pyre. From these representations we can form a fairly accurate conception of the form and attributes of the god. They exhibit him as a bearded man standing on a horned and often winged lion. Upon his head he wears a high pointed cap or mitre, and he is clad sometimes in a long robe, sometimes in a short tunic. On at least one coin his feet are shod in high boots with flaps. At his side or over his shoulder are slung a sword, a bow-case, and a quiver, sometimes only one or two of them. His right hand is raised and sometimes holds a flower. His left hand grasps a double-headed axe, and sometimes a wreath either in addition to the axe or instead of it; but the double-headed axe is one of Sandan's most constant attributes.<sup>1</sup>

#### § 4. *The Gods of Boghaz-Keui*

Boghaz-Keui the ancient capital of a Hittite kingdom in Cappadocia.

Now a deity of almost precisely the same type figures prominently in the celebrated group of Hittite sculptures which is carved on the rocks at Boghaz-Keui in North-western Cappadocia. The village of Boghaz-Keui, that is, "the village of the defile," stands at the mouth of a deep, narrow, and picturesque gorge in a wild upland valley, shut in by rugged mountains of grey limestone. The houses are built on the lower slopes of the hills, and a stream issuing from the gorge flows past them to join the Halys, which is distant about ten hours' journey to the west. Immediately above the modern village a great ancient city, enclosed by massive fortification

<sup>1</sup> F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Monnaies Grecques* (Amsterdam, 1883), pp. 366 sq., 433, 435, with plates F. 24, 25, H. 14 (*Verhandelingen der Konink. Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde*, xiv.); F. Imhoof-Blumer and O. Keller, *Tier- und Pflanzenbilder auf Münzen und Gemmen des klassischen Altertums* (Leipzig, 1889), pp. 70 sq., with pl. xii. 7, 8, 9; F. Imhoof-Blumer, "Coin-types of some Cilician Cities," *Journal of Hellenic*

*Studies*, xviii. (1898) pp. 169-171; P. Gardner, *Types of Greek Coins*, pl. xiii. 20; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. 178, 179, 184, 186, 206, 213, with plates xxxii. 13, 14, 15, 16, xxxiv. 2, xxxvi. 9; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, ii. 548, with pl. ix. 11. The booted Sandan is figured by G. F. Hill, *op. cit.* pl. xxxvi. 9.



walls, rose terrace above terrace on the rough broken ground of the mountain-side, culminating in two citadels perched on the tops of precipitous crags. A dense undergrowth of stunted oak coppice now covers much of the site. The ruins of a large palace, built of enormous blocks of stone, occupy a terrace in a commanding situation within the circuit of the walls. This vast city, some four or five miles in circumference, appears to have been the ancient Pteria, which Croesus, king of Lydia, captured in his war with Cyrus. It was probably the capital of a powerful Hittite empire before the Phrygians made their way from Europe into the interior of Asia Minor and established a rival state to the west of the Halys.<sup>1</sup>

From the village of Boghaz-Keui a steep and rugged path leads up hill to the sanctuary, distant about a mile and a half to the east. Here among the grey limestone cliffs there is a spacious natural chamber or hall of roughly oblong shape, roofed only by the sky, and enclosed on three sides by high rocks. One of the short sides is open, and through it you look out on the broken slopes beyond and the more distant mountains, which make a graceful picture set in a massy frame. The length of the chamber is about a hundred feet; its breadth varies from twenty-five to fifty feet. A nearly level sward forms the floor. On the right-hand side, as you face inward, a narrow opening in the rocks leads into another but much smaller chamber, or rather passage, which would seem to have been the inner sanctuary or Holy of Holies. It is a romantic spot, where the deep shadows of the rocks are relieved by the bright foliage of walnut-trees and by the sight of the sky and clouds over-

The rock-sculptures in the outer sanctuary at Boghaz-Keui represent two processions meeting.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 76; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Πέρσιον. As to the situation of Boghaz-Keui and the ruins of Pteria see W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia* (London, 1842), i. 391 sq.; H. Barth, "Reise von Trapezunt durch die nördliche Hälfte Klein-Asiens," *Ergänzungsheft zu Petermann's Geographischen Mittheilungen* (No. 2), 1860, pp. 44-52; H. F. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor* (London, 1881), pp. 64,

71 sq.; W. M. Ramsay, "Historical Relations of Phrygia and Cappadocia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S., xv. (1883) p. 103; *id.*, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor* (London, 1890), pp. 28 sq., 33 sq.; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 596 sq.; K. Humann und O. Puchstein, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien* (Berlin, 1890), pp. 71-80, with Atlas, plates xi.-xiv.; E. Chantre, *Mission en Cappadoce* (Paris, 1898), pp. 13 sq.

head. On the rock-walls of both chambers are carved the famous bas-reliefs. In the outer sanctuary these reliefs represent two great processions which defile along the two long sides of the chamber and meet face to face on the short wall at the inner end. The figures on the left-hand wall are all men, clad for the most part in the characteristic Hittite costume, which consists of a high pointed cap, shoes with turned-up toes, and a tunic drawn in at the waist and falling short of the knees. The figures on the right-hand wall are women wearing tall, square, flat-topped bonnets with ribbed sides; their long dresses fall in perpendicular folds to their feet, which are shod in shoes like those of the men. On the short wall, where the processions meet, the greater size of the central figures, as well as their postures and attributes, mark them out as divine. At the head of the male procession marches a bearded deity clad in the ordinary Hittite costume of tall pointed cap, short tunic, and turned-up shoes; but his feet rest on the bowed heads of two men, in his right hand he holds a mace or truncheon topped with a knob, while his extended left hand grasps a symbol, which apparently consists of a trident surmounted by an oval with a cross-bar. Facing him, at the head of the female procession, stands a goddess on a lioness or panther. Her costume does not differ from that of the women: her hair hangs down in a long plait behind: in her extended right hand she holds out an emblem to touch that of the god. The shape and meaning of her emblem are obscure. It consists of a stem with two pairs of protuberances, perhaps leaves or branches, one above the other, the whole being surmounted, like the emblem of the god, by an oval with a cross-bar. Under the outstretched arms of the two deities appear the front parts of two animals, which have been usually interpreted as bulls, but sometimes as goats or cats; each of them wears on its head the high conical Hittite cap, and its body is concealed by that of the deity. Immediately behind the goddess marches a smaller and apparently youthful male figure, standing like her upon a lioness or panther. He is beardless and wears the Hittite dress of high pointed cap, short tunic, and shoes with turned-up toes. A crescent-hilted sword is girt at his side;



in his left hand he holds a double-headed axe, and in his right a staff topped by an armless doll with the symbol of the cross-barred oval instead of a head.

The entrance to the smaller chamber is guarded on either side by the figure of a winged monster carved on the rock; the bodies of both figures are human, but one of them has the head of a dog, the other the head of a lion. In the inner sanctuary, to which this monster-guarded passage leads, the walls are also carved in relief. On one side we see a procession of twelve men in Hittite costume marching with curved swords in their right hands. On the opposite wall is a colossal erect figure of a deity with a human head and a body curiously composed of four lions, two above and two below, the latter standing on their heads. The god wears the high conical Hittite hat: his face is youthful and beardless like that of the male figure standing on the lioness in the large chamber; and the ear turned to the spectator is pierced with a ring. To the right of this deity a square panel cut in the face of the rock exhibits a group of two figures in relief. The larger of the two figures closely resembles the youth on the lioness in the outer sanctuary. His chin is beardless; he wears the same high pointed cap, the same short tunic, the same turned-up shoes, the same crescent-hilted sword, and he carries a similar armless doll in his right hand. But his left arm encircles the neck of the smaller figure, whom he seems to clasp to his side in an attitude of protection. The smaller figure thus embraced by the god is clearly a priest. His face is beardless; he wears a skull-cap and a long mantle reaching to his feet with a sort of chasuble thrown over it. The crescent-shaped hilt of a sword projects from under his mantle. The wrist of his right arm is clasped by the god's left hand; in his left hand the priest holds a crook or pastoral staff which ends below in a curl. Both the priest and his protector are facing towards the lion-god. In an upper corner of the panel behind them is a divine emblem composed of a winged disc resting on what look like two Ionic columns, while between them appear three symbols of doubtful significance. The figure of the priest in this costume, though not in this attitude, is a familiar one; for it occurs

The rock-sculptures in the inner sanctuary at Boghaz-Keul.

The lion-god.

The god protecting his priest.

Other representations of the priest at Boghaz-Keui and Euyuk.

twice in the outer sanctuary and is repeated twice at the great Hittite palace of Euyuk, distant about four and a half hours' ride to the north-east of Boghaz-Keui. In the outer sanctuary at Boghaz-Keui we see the priest marching in the procession of the men, and holding in one hand his curled staff, or *lituus*, and in the other a symbol like that of the goddess on the lioness: above his head appears the winged disc without the other attributes. Moreover he occupies a conspicuous place by himself on the right-hand wall of the outer sanctuary, quite apart from the two processions, and carved on a larger scale than any of the other figures in them. Here he stands on two heaps, perhaps intended to represent mountains, and he carries in his right hand the emblem of the winged disc supported on two Ionic columns with the other symbols between them, except that the central symbol is replaced by a masculine figure wearing a pointed cap and a long robe decorated with a dog-tooth pattern. On one of the reliefs at the palace of Euyuk we see the priest with his characteristic dress and staff followed by a priestess, each of them with a hand raised as if in adoration: they are approaching the image of a bull which stands on a high pedestal with an altar before it. Behind them a priest leads a flock of rams to the sacrifice. On another relief at Euyuk the priest, similarly attired and followed by a priestess, is approaching a seated goddess and apparently pouring a libation at her feet. Both these scenes doubtless represent acts of worship paid in the one case to a goddess, in the other to a bull.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, i. 393-395; H. F. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, pp. 59 *sq.*, 66-78; W. M. Ramsay, "Historical Relations of Phrygia and Asia Minor," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. xv. (1883) pp. 113-120; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 623-656, 666-672; K. Humann und O. Puchstein, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien*, pp. 55-70, with Atlas, plates vii.-x.; E. Chantre, *Mission en Cappadoce*, pp. 3-5, 16-26; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, pp. 42-50.

Compare P. Jensen, *Hittiter und Armenier*, pp. 165 *sqq.* An interesting Hittite symbol which occurs both in the sanctuary at Boghaz-Keui and at the palace of Euyuk is the double-headed eagle. In both places it serves as the support of divine or priestly personages. After being adopted as a badge by the Seljuk Sultans in the Middle Ages, it passed into Europe with the Crusaders and became in time the escutcheon of the Austrian and Russian empires. See W. J. Hamilton, *op. cit.* i. 383; Perrot et Chipiez, *op. cit.* iv. 681-683, with pl. viii. E; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, p. 50.



We have still to inquire into the meaning of the rock-carvings at Boghaz-Keui. What are these processions which are meeting? Who are the personages represented? and what are they doing? Some have thought that the scene is historical and commemorates a great event, such as a treaty of peace between two peoples or the marriage of a king's son to a king's daughter.<sup>1</sup> But to this view it has been rightly objected that the attributes of the principal figures prove them to be divine or priestly, and that the scene is therefore religious or mythical rather than historical. With regard to the two personages who head the processions and hold out their symbols to each other, the most probable opinion appears to be that they stand for the great Asiatic goddess of fertility and her consort, by whatever names these deities were known, whether as Ishtar and Tammuz, as Aphrodite and Adonis, as Sandan and Mylitta, or as Cybele and Attis; for under diverse names a similar divine couple was worshipped with similar rites all over Western Asia.<sup>2</sup> The tall flat-topped hat with perpendicular grooves which the goddess wears, and the lioness or panther on which she stands, remind us of the turreted crown and lion-drawn car of Cybele, who was worshipped in the neighbouring land of Phrygia across the Halys.<sup>3</sup> So Atargatis, the great Syrian goddess of Hierapolis-Bambyce, was portrayed sitting on

The two deities at the head of the processions at Boghaz-Keui appear to be the great Asiatic goddess and her consort.

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, i. 394 sq.; H. Barth, in *Monatsberichte der königl. Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1859, pp. 128 sqq.; *id.*, "Reise von Trapezunt," *Ergänzungsheft zu Petermann's Geograph. Mittheilungen* (No. 2) (Gotha, 1860), pp. 45 sq.; H. F. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, p. 69; E. Chantre, *Mission en Cappadoce*, pp. 20 sqq. According to Barth, the scene represented is the marriage of Aryenis, daughter of Alyattes, king of Lydia, to Astyages, son of Cyaxares, king of the Medes (Herodotus, i. 74). For a discussion of various interpretations which have been proposed see Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 630 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> This is in substance the view of

Raoul-Rochette, Lajard, W. M. Ramsay, G. Perrot, and C. P. Tiele. See Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), p. 180, n. 1; W. M. Ramsay, "On the early Historical Relations between Phrygia and Cappadocia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. xv. (1885) pp. 113-120; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 630 sqq.; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 255-257.

<sup>3</sup> As to the lions and mural crown of Cybele see Lucretius, ii. 600 sqq.; Catullus, lxiii. 76 sqq.; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 23. 20; Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1644 sqq.

lions and wearing a tower on her head.<sup>1</sup> At Babylon an image of a goddess whom the Greeks called Rhea had the figures of two lions standing on her knees.<sup>2</sup>

The youth on the lioness, bearing the double axe, at Boghaz-Keui may be the divine son and lover of the goddess.

But in the rock-hewn sculptures of Boghaz-Keui, who is the youth with the tall pointed cap and double axe who stands on a lioness or panther immediately behind the great goddess? His figure is all the more remarkable because he is the only male who interrupts the long procession of women. Probably he is at once the divine son and the divine lover of the goddess; for we shall find later on that in Phrygian mythology Attis united in himself both these characters.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De deo Syria*, 31; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 23. 19. Lucian's description of her image is confirmed by coins of Hierapolis, on which the goddess is represented wearing a high head-dress and seated on a lion. See B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 654; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, iii. 139 sq. That the name of the Syrian goddess of Hierapolis-Bambyce was Atargatis is mentioned by Strabo (xvi. i. 27, p. 748). On Egyptian monuments the Semitic goddess Kadesh is represented standing on a lion. See W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, pp. 314 sq. It is to be remembered that Hierapolis-Bambyce was the direct successor of Carchemish, the great Hittite capital on the Euphrates, and may have inherited many features of Hittite religion. See A. H. Sayce, *The Hittites*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 94 sqq., 105 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, ii. 9. 5.

<sup>3</sup> In thus interpreting the youth with the double axe I agree with Prof. W. M. Ramsay ("On the early Historical Relations between Phrygia and Cappadocia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. xv. (1883) pp. 118, 120) and C. P. Tiele (*Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 246, 255). That the youthful figure on the lioness or panther represents the lover of the great goddess is the view also of Professors Jensen and Hommel. See P. Jensen, *Hittiter und Armenier*, pp. 173-175, 180; F. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten*

*Orients*, p. 51. Prof. Perrot holds that the youth in question is a double of the bearded god who stands at the head of the male procession, their costume being the same, though their attributes differ (Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 651). This opinion is not inconsistent with that which I have adopted, for the divine son is naturally a double of his divine father. With regard to the lionesses or panthers, a bas-relief found at Carchemish, the capital of a Hittite kingdom on the Euphrates, shows two male figures in Hittite costume, with pointed caps and turned-up shoes, standing on a couching lion. The foremost of the two figures is winged and carries a short curved truncheon in his right hand. According to Prof. Perrot, the two figures represent a god followed by a priest or a king. See Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 549 sq. Again, on a sculptured slab found at Amrit in Phœnicia we see a god standing on a lion and holding a lion's whelp in his left hand, while in his right hand he brandishes a club or sword. See Perrot et Chipiez, *op. cit.* iii. 412-414. The type of a god or goddess standing or sitting on a lion occurs also in Assyrian art, from which the Phœnicians and Hittites may have borrowed it. See Perrot et Chipiez, *op. cit.* ii. 642-644. Much evidence as to the representation of Asiatic deities with lions has been collected by Raoul-Rochette, in his learned dissertation "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien,"



The lioness or panther on which he stands marks his affinity with the goddess, who is supported by a similar animal. It is natural that the lion-goddess should have a lion-son and a lion-lover. For we may take it as probable that the Oriental deities who are represented standing or sitting in human form on the backs of lions and other animals were originally indistinguishable from the beasts, and that the complete separation of the bestial from the human or divine shape was a consequence of that growth of knowledge and of power which led man in time to respect himself more and the brutes less. The hybrid gods of Egypt with their human bodies and animal heads form an intermediate stage in this evolution of anthropomorphic deities out of beasts.

We may now perhaps hazard a conjecture as to the meaning of that strange colossal figure in the inner shrine at Boghaz-Keui with its human head and its body composed of lions. For it is to be observed that the head of the figure is youthful and beardless, and that it wears a tall pointed cap, thus resembling in both respects the youth with the double-headed axe who stands on a lion in the outer sanctuary. We may suppose that the leonine figure in the inner shrine sets forth the true mystic, that is, the old savage nature of the god who in the outer shrine presented himself to his worshippers in the decent semblance of a man. To the chosen few who were allowed to pass the monster-guarded portal into the Holy of Holies, the awful secret may have been revealed that their god was a lion, or rather a lion-man, a being in whom the bestial and human natures mysteriously co-existed. The reader may remember that on the rock beside this leonine divinity is carved a group which represents a god with his arm twined round the neck of his priest in an attitude of protection, holding one of the priest's hands in his own. Both figures are looking and stepping towards the lion-monster, and the god is holding out his right hand as if pointing to it. The scene may represent the deity revealing the mystery to the priest, or preparing him to act his part in some solemn rite for which all his strength and courage will

The  
mystery of  
the lion-  
god.

*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 106 sqq. Compare

De Vogüé, *Mélanges d'Archéologie Orientale*, pp. 44 sqq.

be needed. He seems to be leading his minister onward, comforting him with an assurance that no harm can come near him while the divine arm is around him and the divine hand clasps his. Whither is he leading him? Perhaps to death. The deep shadows of the rocks which fall on the two figures in the gloomy chasm may be an emblem of darker shadows soon to fall on the priest. Yet still he grasps his pastoral staff and goes forward, as though he said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

The processions at Boghaz-Keui appear to represent the Sacred Marriage of the god and goddess.

If there is any truth in these guesses—for they are little more—the three principal figures in the processional scene at Boghaz-Keui represent the divine Father, the divine Mother, and the divine Son. But we have still to ask, What are they doing? That they are engaged in the performance of some religious rite seems certain. But what is it? We may conjecture that it is the rite of the Sacred Marriage, and that the scene is copied from a ceremony which was periodically performed in this very place by human representatives of the deities.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the solemn meeting of the male and female figures at the head of their respective processions obviously suggests a marriage, and has been so interpreted by scholars, who, however, regarded it as the historical wedding of a prince and princess instead of the mystic union of a god and goddess, overlooking or explaining away the symbols of divinity which accompany the principal personages.<sup>2</sup> We may suppose that at Boghaz-Keui, as at many other places in the interior of Asia Minor, the government was in the hands of a family who combined royal with priestly functions and personated the gods whose names they bore. Thus at Pessinus in Phrygia, as we shall see later on, the priests of Cybele bore the name of her consort Attis, and doubtless represented him in the ritual.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "There can be no doubt that there is here represented a Sacred Marriage, the meeting of two deities worshipped in different places, like the Horus of Edfu and the Hathor of Dendera" (C. F. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 255). This

view seems to differ from, though it approaches, the one suggested in the text.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 239. Compare the remarks of Prof. W. M. Ramsay ("Pre-Hellenic Monuments of Cappadocia," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philo-*



If this was so at Boghaz-Keui, we may surmise that the chief pontiff and his family annually celebrated the marriage of the divine powers of fertility, the Father God and the Mother Goddess, for the purpose of ensuring the fruitfulness of the earth and the multiplication of men and beasts. The principal parts in the ceremony would naturally be played by the pontiff himself and his wife, unless indeed they preferred for good reasons to delegate the onerous duty to others. That such a delegation took place is perhaps suggested by the appearance of the pontiff himself in a subordinate place in the procession, as well as by his separate representation in another place, as if he were in the act of surveying the ceremony from a distance.<sup>1</sup> The part of the divine Son at the rite would fitly devolve upon one of the high-priest's own offspring, who may well have been numerous. For it is probable that here, as elsewhere in Asia Minor, the Mother Goddess was personated by a crowd of sacred harlots,<sup>2</sup> with whom the spiritual ruler may have been required to consort in his character of incarnate deity. But if the personation of the Son of God at the rites laid a heavy burden of suffering on the shoulders of the actor, it is possible that the representative of the deity may have been drawn, perhaps by lot, from among the numerous progeny of the consecrated courtesans; for these women, as incarnations of the Mother Goddess, were probably supposed to transmit to their offspring some portion of their own divinity. Be that as it may, if the three principal personages in the processional scene at Boghaz-Keui are indeed the Father, the Mother, and the Son, the remarkable position assigned

*logie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xlii. (1890) p. 78): "Similar priest-dynasts are a widespread feature of the primitive social system of Asia Minor; their existence is known with certainty or inferred with probability at the two towns Komana; at Venasa not far north of Tyana, at Olbia, at Pessinous, at Aizanoi, and many other places. Now there are two characteristics which can be regarded as probable in regard to most of these priests, and as proved in regard to some of them: (1) they

wore the dress and represented the person of the god, whose priests they were; (2) they were *ἑρμηνεῖς*, losing their individual name at their succession to the office, and assuming a sacred name, often that of the god himself or some figure connected with the cultus of the god. The priest of Cybele at Pessinous was called Attis, the priests of Sabazios were Saboi, the worshippers of Bacchos Bacchoi." As to the priestly rulers of Olbia, see below, pp. 112 *seq.*

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 103 *sq.*

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 32 *seq.*

to the third of them in the procession, where he walks behind his Mother alone in the procession of women, appears to indicate that he was supposed to be more closely akin to her than to his Father. From this again we may conjecturally infer that mother-kin rather than father-kin was the rule which regulated descent among the Hittites.

### § 5. *Sandan and Baal at Tarsus*

Sandan at Tarsus appears to be a son of Baal, as Hercules was a son of Zeus.

Whatever may be thought of these speculations, one thing seems fairly clear and certain. The figure which I have called the divine Son at Boghaz-Keui is identical with the god Sandan, who appears on the pyre at Tarsus. In both personages the costume, the attributes, the attitude are the same. Both represent a man clad in a short tunic with a tall pointed cap on his head, a sword at his side, a double-headed axe in his hand, and a lion or panther under his feet.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, if we are right in identifying him as the divine Son at Boghaz-Keui, we may conjecture that under the name of Sandan he bore the same character at Tarsus. The conjecture squares perfectly with the title of Hercules, which the Greeks bestowed on Sandan; for Hercules was the son of Zeus, the great father-god. Moreover, we have seen that the Baal of Tarsus, with the grapes and the corn in his hand, was assimilated to Zeus.<sup>2</sup> Thus it would appear that at Tarsus as at Boghaz-Keui there was a pair of deities, a divine Father and a divine Son, whom the Greeks identified with Zeus and Hercules respectively. If the Baal of Tarsus was a god of fertility, as his attributes clearly imply, his identification with Zeus would be natural, since it was Zeus who, in the belief of the Greeks, sent the fertilising rain from heaven.<sup>3</sup> And the identification of Sandan with Hercules would be equally natural, since the lion and the death on the pyre were features common to both. Our conclusion then is that it was the divine Son, the lion-god, who was burned in effigy or in the person of a human representative at Tarsus, and

<sup>1</sup> The figure exhibits a few minor variations on the coins of Tarsus. See the works cited above, p. 100, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 92 sq.

<sup>3</sup> L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> i. 117 sqq.



perhaps at Boghaz-Keui. Semitic parallels suggest that the victim who played the part of the Son of God in the fiery furnace ought in strictness to be the king's son.<sup>1</sup> But no doubt in later times an effigy would be substituted for the man.

### § 6. Priestly Kings of Olba

Unfortunately we know next to nothing of the kings and priests of Tarsus. In Greek times we hear of an Epicurean philosopher of the city, Lysias by name, who was elected by his fellow-citizens to the office of Crown-wearer, that is, to the priesthood of Hercules. Once raised to that dignity, he would not lay it down again, but played the part of tyrant, wearing a white robe edged with purple, a costly cloak, white shoes, and a golden wreath of laurel. He truckled to the mob by distributing among them the property of the wealthy, while he put to death such as refused to open their money-bags to him.<sup>2</sup> Though we cannot distinguish in this account between the legal and the illegal exercise of authority, yet we may safely infer that the priesthood of Hercules, that is of Sandan, at Tarsus continued down to late times to be an office of great dignity and power, not unworthy to be held in earlier times by the kings themselves. Scanty as is our information as to the kings of Cilicia, we hear of two whose names appear to indicate that they stood in some special relation to the divine Sandan. One of them was Sandu'arri, lord of Kundi and Sizu, which have been identified with Anchiale and Sis in Cilicia.<sup>3</sup> The other was Sanda-sarme, who gave his daughter in marriage to Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria.<sup>4</sup> It would be in accordance with

Priests of  
Sandan-  
Hercules  
at Tarsus.

Kings of  
Cilicia  
related to  
Sandan

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Athenæus, v. 54, p. 215 B, C. The high-priest of the Syrian goddess at Hierapolis held office for a year, and wore a purple robe and a golden tiara (Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 42). We may conjecture that the priesthood of Hercules at Tarsus was in later times at least an annual office.

<sup>3</sup> E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. § 389, p. 475; H. Winckler, in E. Schrader's *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>2</sup> p. 88. Kuinda

was the name of a Cilician fortress a little way inland from Anchiale (Strabo, xiv. 5. 10, p. 672).

<sup>4</sup> E. Meyer, *op. cit.* i. § 393, p. 480; C. P. Tiele, *Babylonisch-assyrische Geschichte*, p. 360. Sandan and Sandas occur repeatedly as names of Cilician men. They are probably identical with, or modified forms of, the divine name. See Strabo, xiv. 5. 14, p. 674; Plutarch, *Poplicola*, 17; *Corpus Inscriptionum Græcarum*, No. 4401; Ch. Michel,

analogy if the kings of Tarsus formerly held the priesthood of Sandan and claimed to represent him in their own person.

Priestly  
kings of  
Olba who  
bore the  
names of  
Teucer and  
Ajax.

We know that the whole of Western or Mountainous Cilicia was ruled by kings who combined the regal office with the priesthood of Zeus, or rather of a native deity whom, like the Baal of Tarsus, the Greeks assimilated to their own Zeus. These priestly potentates had their seat at Olba, and most of them bore the name either of Teucer or of Ajax,<sup>1</sup> but we may suspect that these appellations are merely Greek distortions of native Cilician names. Teucer (*Teukros*) may be a corruption of Tark, Trok, Tarku, or Troko, all of which occur in the names of Cilician priests and kings. At all events, it is worthy of notice that one, if not two, of these priestly Teucers had a father called Tarkuaris,<sup>2</sup> and that in a long list of priests who served Zeus at the Corycian cave, not many miles from Olba, the names Tarkuaris, Tarkumbios, Tarkimos, Trokoarbasis, and Trokombigremis, besides many other obviously native names, occur side by side with Teucer and other purely Greek appellations.<sup>3</sup> In like manner the Teucrids, who traced

The  
Teucrids  
of Salamis  
in Cyprus.

*Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 878; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften d. Kaiser. Akademie d. Wissenschaften, Philosoph.-histor. Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896) No. vi. pp. 46, 131 sq., 140 (Inscriptions 115, 218, 322).

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 10, p. 672. The name of the high-priest Ajax, son of Teucer, occurs on coins of Olba, dating from about the beginning of our era (B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 609); and the name of Teucer is also known from inscriptions. See below, pp. 119, 126.

<sup>2</sup> E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Western Cilicia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1891) pp. 226, 263; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der Kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, xlv. (1896) No. vi. pp. 53, 88.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 878. Tarkondimotos was the name of two kings of Eastern Cilicia in the first century B.C. One

of them corresponded with Cicero and fell at the battle of Actium. See Cicero, *Epist. ad Familiares*, xv. 1. 2; Strabo, xiv. 5. 18, p. 676; Dio Cassius, xli. 63. 1, xlvii. 26. 2, l. 14. 2, li. 2. 2, li. 7. 4, liv. 9. 2; Plutarch, *Antoninus*, 61; B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 618; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, Nos. 752, 753. Moreover, Tarkudimne or Tarkuwassimi occurs as the name of a king of Erme (?) or Urmi (?) in a bilingual Hittite and cuneiform inscription engraved on a silver seal. See W. Wright, *The Empire of the Hittites* (London, 1886), pp. 163 sq.; L. Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hittiticarum*, pp. 42 sq., pl. xlii. 9; *id.*, *The Hittites*, pp. 29 sq.; P. Jensen, *Hittiter und Armenier* (Strasbourg, 1898), pp. 22, 30 sq. In this inscription Prof. Jensen suggests Tarlabi- as an alternative reading for Tarku-. Compare P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, pp. 362-364.



their descent from Zeus and reigned at Salamis in Cyprus,<sup>1</sup> may well have been a native dynasty, who concocted a Greek pedigree for themselves in the days when Greek civilisation was fashionable. The legend which attributed the foundation of the Cyprian Salamis to Teucer, son of Telamon, appears to be late and unknown to Homer.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, a cruel form of human sacrifice which was practised in the city down to historical times savours rather of Oriental barbarity than of Greek humanity. Led or driven by the youths, a man ran thrice round the altar; then the priest stabbed him in the throat with a spear and burned his body whole on a heaped-up pyre. The sacrifice was offered in the month of Aphrodite to Diomede, who along with Agraulus, daughter of Cecrops, had a temple at Salamis. A temple of Athena stood within the same sacred enclosure. It is said that in olden times the sacrifice was offered to Agraulus, and not to Diomede. According to another account it was instituted by Teucer in honour of Zeus. However that may have been, the barbarous custom lasted down to the reign of Hadrian, when Diphilus, king of Cyprus, abolished or rather mitigated it by substituting the sacrifice of an ox for that of a man.<sup>3</sup> On the hypothesis here suggested we must suppose that these Greek names of divine or heroic figures at the Cyprian Salamis covered more or less similar figures of the Asiatic pantheon. And in the Salaminian

Burnt sacrifices of human victims at Salamis and traces of a similar custom elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> Isocrates, *Or.* ix. 14 and 18 *sq.*; Pausanias, ii. 29. 2 and 4; W. E. Engel, *Kypros*, i. 212 *sq.* As to the names Teucer and Teucran see P. Kretschmer, *op. cit.* pp. 189-191. Prof. Kretschmer believes that the native population of Cyprus belonged to the non-Aryan stock of Asia Minor.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Engel, *Kypros*, i. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 34 *sq.*; Lactantius, *Divin. Inst.* i. 21. As to the date when the custom was abolished, Lactantius says that it was done "recently in the reign of Hadrian." Porphyry says that the practice was put down by Diphilus, king of Cyprus, "in the time of Seleucus the Theologian." As nothing seems to be known as to the date of

King Diphilus and Seleucus the Theologian, I have ventured to assume, on the strength of Lactantius's statement, that they were contemporaries of Hadrian. But it is curious to find kings of Cyprus reigning so late. Beside the power of the Roman governors, their authority can have been little more than nominal, like that of native rajahs in British India. Seleucus the Theologian may be, as Fabricius supposed (*Bibliotheca Græca*,<sup>4</sup> ed. G. C. Harles, i. 86, compare 522), the Alexandrian grammarian who composed a voluminous work on the gods (*Suidas*, i. v. 2*Deuxes*). Suetonius tells an anecdote (*Tiberius*, 56) about a grammarian named Seleucus who flourished, and faded prematurely, at the court of Tiberius.

burnt-sacrifice of a man we may perhaps detect the original form of the ceremony which in historical times appears to have been performed upon an image of Sandan or Hercules at Tarsus. When an ox was sacrificed instead of a man, the old sacrificial rites would naturally continue to be observed in all other respects exactly as before: the animal would be led thrice round the altar, stabbed with a spear, and burned on a pyre. Now at the Syrian Hierapolis the greatest festival of the year bore the name of the Pyre or the Torch. It was held at the beginning of spring. Great trees were then cut down and planted in the court of the temple: sheep, goats, birds, and other creatures were hung upon them: sacrificial victims were led round: then fire was set to the whole, and everything was consumed in the flames.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps here also the burning of animals was a substitute for the burning of men. When the practice of human sacrifice becomes too revolting to humanity to be tolerated, its abolition is commonly effected by substituting either animals or images for living men or women. At Salamis certainly, and perhaps at Hierapolis, the substitutes were animals: at Tarsus, if I am right, they were images. In this connection the statement of a Greek writer as to the worship of Adonis in Cyprus deserves attention. He says that as Adonis had been honoured by Aphrodite, the Cyprians after his death cast live doves on a pyre to him, and that the birds, flying away from the flames, fell into another pyre and were consumed.<sup>2</sup> The statement seems to be a description of an actual custom of burning doves in sacrifice to Adonis. Such a mode of honouring him would be very remarkable, since doves were commonly sacred to his divine mistress Aphrodite or Astarte. For example, at the Syrian Hierapolis, one of the chief seats of her worship, these birds were so holy that they might not even be touched. If a man inadvertently touched a dove, he was unclean or tabooed for the rest of the day. Hence the

Burnt  
sacrifice  
of doves  
to Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 49.

<sup>2</sup> Diogenianus, *Præfatio*, in *Paroemiographi Graeci*, ed. Leutsch et Schneidewin, i. 180. Raoul-Rochette regarded the custom as part of the ritual of the divine death and resurrec-

tion. He compared it with the burning of Melcarth at Tyre. See his memoir, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (1848), p. 32.



birds, never being molested, were so tame that they lived with the people in their houses, and commonly picked up their food fearlessly on the ground.<sup>1</sup> Can the burning of the sacred bird of Aphrodite in the Cyprian worship of Adonis have been a substitute for the burning of a sacred man who personated the lover of the goddess?

If, as many scholars think, Tark or Tarku was the name, or part of the name, of a great Hittite deity, sometimes identified as the god of the sky and the lightning,<sup>2</sup> we may conjecture that Tark or Tarku was the native name of the god of Olba, whom the Greeks called Zeus, and that the priestly kings who bore the name of Teucer represented the god Tark or Tarku in their own persons. This conjecture is confirmed by the observation that Olba, the ancient name of the city, is itself merely a Grecised form of Oura, the name which the place retains to this day.<sup>3</sup> The situa-

The priestly Teucers of Olba perhaps personated a native god Tark.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 54.

<sup>2</sup> A. H. Sayce, in W. Wright's *Empire of the Hittites*,<sup>2</sup> p. 186; W. M. Ramsay, "Pre-Hellenic Monuments of Cappadocia," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, xiv. (1903) pp. 81 sq.; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 251; W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, p. 333; P. Jensen, *Hittiter und Armenter*, pp. 70, 150 sqq., 155 sqq.; F. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients*, pp. 44, 51 sq.; L. Meuser-Schmidt, *The Hittites*, p. 40. Prof. W. M. Ramsay thinks (*i.e.*) that Tark was the native name of the god who had his sanctuary at Dastarkon in Cappadocia and who was called by the Greeks the Cataonian Apollo: his sanctuary was revered all over Cappadocia (Strabo, xiv. 2. 5, p. 537). Prof. Hommel holds that Tarku or Tarchu was the chief Hittite deity, worshipped all over the south of Asia Minor. The Hittite thunder-god, whatever his name may have been, is supposed to be represented on two stone monuments of Hittite art which have been found at Zenjirli and Babylon. On both we see a bearded male god wearing the usual Hittite

costume of tall cap, short tunic and shoes turned up at the toes: a crescent-hilted sword is girt at his side: his hands are raised: in the right he holds a single-headed axe or hammer, in the left a trident of wavy lines, which is believed to represent a bundle of thunder-bolts. On the Babylonian slab, which bears a long Hittite inscription, the god's cap is ornamented with a pair of horns. See K. Humann and O. Puchstein, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien* (Berlin, 1890), Atlas, pl. xlv. 3; *Ausgrabungen zu Sendschirli*, lii. (Berlin, 1902) pl. xli.; R. Koldewey, *Die Hittitische Inschrift gefunden in der Königsburg von Babylon* (Leipzig, 1900), plates 1 and 2 (*Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, Heft 1); L. Meuser-Schmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hittitarum*, pl. i. 5 and 6; *id.*, *The Hittites*, p. 41, fig. 6; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> p. 93. Prof. W. Max Müller thinks that Targh or Tarkh did not designate any particular deity, but was the general Hittite name for "god."

<sup>3</sup> J. T. Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the R. Geographical Society*, N.S. xii.

tion of the town, moreover, speaks strongly in favour of the view that it was from the beginning an aboriginal settlement, though in after days, like so many other Asiatic cities, it took on a varnish of Greek culture. For it stood remote from the sea on a lofty and barren tableland, with a rigorous winter climate, in the highlands of Cilicia.

Western  
or Rugged  
Cilicia.

Great indeed is the contrast between the bleak windy uplands of Western or Rugged Cilicia, as the ancients called it, and the soft luxuriant lowlands of Eastern Cilicia, where winter is almost unknown and summer annually drives the population to seek in the cool air of the mountains a refuge from the intolerable heat and deadly fevers of the plains. In Western Cilicia, on the other hand, a lofty tableland, ending in a high sharp edge on the coast, rises steadily inland till it passes gradually into the chain of heights which divide it from the interior. Looked at from the sea it resembles a great blue wave swelling in one uniform sweep till its crest breaks into foam in the distant snows of the Taurus. The surface of the tableland is almost everywhere rocky and overgrown, in the intervals of the rocks, with dense, thorny, almost impenetrable scrub. Only here and there in a hollow or glen the niggardly soil allows of a patch of cultivation; and here and there fine oaks and planes, towering over the brushwood, clothe with a richer foliage the depth of the valleys. None but wandering herdsmen with their flocks now maintain a precarious existence in this rocky wilderness. Yet the ruined towns which stud the country prove that a dense population lived and thrived here in antiquity, while numerous remains of wine-presses and wine-vats bear witness to the successful cultivation of the grape. The chief cause of the present desolation is lack of water; for wells are few and brackish, perennial streams hardly exist, and the ancient aqueducts, which once brought life and fertility to the land, have long been suffered to fall into disrepair.

The  
Cilician  
pirates.

But for ages together the ancient inhabitants of these

(1890) p. 458; *id.*, "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1891) p. 222; W. M. Ramsay, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, pp. 22, 364. Prof. W. M.

Ramsay had shown grounds for thinking that Olba was a Grecised form of a native name Ourba (pronounced Ourwa) before Mr. J. T. Bent discovered the site and the name.



uplands earned their bread by less reputable means than the toil of the husbandman and the vinedresser. They were buccaneers and slavers, scouring the high seas with their galleys and retiring with their booty to the inaccessible fastnesses of their mountains. In the decline of Greek power all over the East the pirate communities of Cilicia grew into a formidable state, recruited by gangs of desperadoes and broken men who flocked to it from all sides. The holds of these robbers may still be seen perched on the brink of the profound ravines which cleave the tableland at frequent intervals. With their walls of massive masonry, their towers and battlements, overhanging dizzy depths, they are admirably adapted to bid defiance to the pursuit of justice. In antiquity the dark forests of cedar, which clothed much of the country and supplied the pirates with timber for their ships, must have rendered access to these fastnesses still more difficult. The great gorge of the Lamas River, which eats its way like a sheet of forked lightning into the heart of the mountains, is dotted every few miles with fortified towns, some of them still magnificent in their ruins, dominating sheer cliffs high above the stream. They are now the haunt only of the ibex and the bear. Each of these communities had its own crest or badge, which may still be seen carved on the corners of the mouldering towers. No doubt, too, it blazoned the same crest on the hull, the sails, or the streamers of the galley which, manned with a crew of ruffians, it sent out to prey upon the rich merchantmen in the Golden Sea, as the corsairs called the highway of commerce between Crete and Africa.

A staircase cut in the rock connects one of these ruined castles with the river in the glen, a thousand feet below. But the steps are worn and dangerous, indeed impassable. You may go for miles along the edge of these stupendous cliffs before you find a way down. The paths keep on the heights, for in many of its reaches the gully affords no foothold even to the agile nomads who alone roam these solitudes. At evening the winding course of the river may be traced for a long distance by a mist which, as the heat of the day declines, rises like steam from the deep gorge and

The deep  
gorges of  
Rugged  
Cilicia.

hangs suspended in a wavy line of fleecy cloud above it. But even more imposing than the ravine of the Lamas is the terrific gorge known as the *Sheitan dere* or Devil's Glen near the Corycian cave. Prodigious walls of rock, glowing in the intense sunlight, black in the shadow, and spanned by a summer sky of the deepest blue, hem in the dry bed of a winter torrent, choked with rocks and tangled with thickets of evergreens, among which the oleanders with their slim stalks, delicate taper leaves, and bunches of crimson blossom stand out conspicuous.<sup>1</sup>

The site  
and ruins  
of Olba.

The ruins of Olba, among the most extensive and remarkable in Asia Minor, were discovered in 1890 by Mr. J. Theodore Bent. But three years before another English traveller had caught a distant view of its battlements and towers outlined against the sky like a city of enchantment or dreams.<sup>2</sup> Standing at a height of nearly six thousand feet above the sea, the upper town commands a free, though somewhat uniform, prospect for immense distances in all directions. The sea is just visible far away to the south. On these heights the winter is long and severe. Snow lies on the ground for months. No Greek would have chosen such a site for a city, so bleak and chill,

<sup>1</sup> J. Theodore Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) pp. 445, 450-453; *id.*, "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1891) pp. 208, 210-212, 217-219; R. Heberdey and A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosoph.-historische Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896) No. vi. pp. 49, 70; D. G. Hogarth and J. A. R. Munro, "Modern and Ancient Roads in Eastern Asia Minor," *Royal Geographical Society, Supplementary Papers*, vol. iii. part 5 (London, 1893), pp. 653 *sq.* As to the Cilician pirates see Strabo, xiv. 5. 2, pp. 668 *sq.*; Plutarch, *Pompeius*, 24; Appian, *Bellum Mithridat.* 92 *sq.*; Dio Cassius, xxxvi. 20-24 [3-6], ed. L. Dindorf; Cicero, *De imperio Cn. Pompeii*, 11 *sq.*; Th. Mommsen, *Roman History* (London, 1868), iii. 68-70, iv. 40-45, 118-120. As to the crests

carved on their towns see J. T. Bent, "Cilician Symbols," *Classical Review*, iv. (1890) pp. 321 *sq.* Among these crests are a club (the badge of Olba), a bunch of grapes, the caps of the Dioscuri, the three-legged symbol, etc. As to the cedars and shipbuilding timber of Cilicia in antiquity see Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, iii. 2. 6, iv. 5. 5. The cedars and firs have now retreated to the higher slopes of the Taurus. Great destruction is wrought in the forests by the roving Yezuks with their flocks; for they light their fires under the trees, tap the firs for turpentine, bark the cedars for their huts and bee-hives, and lay bare whole tracts of country that the grass may grow for their sheep and goats. See J. T. Bent, in *Proceedings of the R. Geogr. Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) pp. 453-458.

<sup>2</sup> D. G. Hogarth, *A Wandering Scholar in the Levant*, pp. 57 *sq.*



so far from blue water; but it served well for a fastness of brigands. Deep gorges, one of them filled for miles with tombs, surround it on all sides, rendering fortification walls superfluous. But a great square tower, four stories high, rises conspicuous on the hill, forming a landmark and earning for this upper town the native name of *Jebel Hissar*, or the Mountain of the Castle. A Greek inscription cut on the tower proves that it was built by Teucer, son of Tarkuaris, one of the priestly potentates of Olba. Among other remains of public buildings the most notable are forty tall Corinthian columns of the great temple of Olbian Zeus. Though coarse in style and corroded by long exposure to frost and snow, these massive pillars, towering above the ruins, produce an imposing effect. That the temple of which they formed part belonged indeed to Olbian Zeus is shown by a Greek inscription found within the sacred area, which records that the pent-houses on the inner side of the boundary wall were built by King Seleucus Nicator and repaired for Olbian Zeus by "the great high-priest Teucer, son of Zenophanes." About two hundred yards from this great temple are standing five elegant granite columns of a small temple dedicated to the goddess Fortune. Further, the remains of two theatres and many other public buildings attest the former splendour of this mountain city. An arched colonnade, of which some Corinthian columns are standing with their architraves, ran through the town; and an ancient paved road, lined with tombs and ruins, leads down hill to a lower and smaller city two or three miles distant. It is this lower town which retains the ancient name of *Oura*. Here the principal ruins occupy an isolated fir-clad height bounded by two narrow ravines full of rock-cut tombs. Below the town the ravines unite and form a fine gorge, down which the old road passed seaward.<sup>1</sup>

The temple of Olbian Zeus.

<sup>1</sup> J. Theodore Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) pp. 445 *sq.*, 458-460; *id.*, "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1890) pp. 220-222; E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Western Cilicia," *ib.* pp. 262-270; R. Heberdey und

A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-histor. Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896) No. vi. pp. 83-91; W. M. Ramsay and D. G. Hogarth, in *American Journal of Archaeology*, vi. (1890) p. 345; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 1231. In one place

§ 7. *The God of the Corycian Cave*

Limestone  
caverns of  
Western  
Cilicia.

Nothing yet found at Olba throws light on the nature of the god who was worshipped there under the Greek name of Zeus. But at two places near the coast, distant only some fourteen or fifteen miles from Olba, a deity also called Zeus by the Greeks was revered in natural surroundings of a remarkable kind, which must have stood in close relation with the worship, and are therefore fitted to illustrate it. In both places the features of the landscape are of the same general cast, and at one of them the god was definitely identified with the Zeus of Olba. The country here consists of a tableland of calcareous rock rent at intervals by those great chasms which are so characteristic of a limestone formation. Similar fissures, with the accompaniment of streams or rivers which pour into them and vanish under ground, are frequent in Greece, and may be observed in our own country near Ingleborough in Yorkshire. Fossil bones of extinct animals are often found embedded in the stalagmite or breccia of limestone caves. For example, the famous Kent's Hole near Torquay contained bones of the mammoth, rhinoceros, lion, hyaena, and bear; and red osseous breccias, charged with the bones of quadrupeds which have long disappeared from Europe, are common in almost all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> Western Cilicia is richer in Miocene deposits than any other part of Anatolia, and the limestone gorges of the coast near Olba are crowded with fossil oysters, corals, and other shells.<sup>2</sup> Here, too, within the space of five miles the limestone plateau is rent by three great chasms, which Greek religion

(*Journ. Hellen. Stud.*, xii. 222) Bent gives the height of Olba as 3800 feet; but this is a misprint, for elsewhere (*Proceed. R. Geogr. Soc.*, N.S. xii. 446, 458) he gives the height as exactly 5850 or roughly 6000 feet. The misprint has unfortunately been repeated by Messrs. Heberdey and Wilhelm (*op. cit.* p. 84, n. 1). The tall tower of Olba is figured on the coins of the city. See G. F. Hill,

*Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pl. xxii. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> ii. 518 *seq.*; *Encyclopædia Britannica*,<sup>9</sup> i. v. "Caves," v. 265 *seq.* Compare my notes on Pausanias, i. 35. 7, viii. 29. 1.

<sup>2</sup> J. T. Bent, in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. (1890) p. 447.



associated with Zeus and Typhon. One of these fissures is the celebrated Corycian cave.

To visit this spot, invested with the double charm of natural beauty and legendary renown, you start from the dead Cilician city of Corycus on the sea, with its ruined walls, towers, and churches, its rock-hewn houses and cisterns, its shattered mole, its island-fortress, still imposing in decay. Viewed from the sea, this part of the Cilician coast, with its long succession of white ruins, relieved by the dark wooded hills behind, presents an appearance of populousness and splendour. But a nearer approach reveals the nakedness and desolation of the once prosperous land.<sup>1</sup> Following the shore westward from Corycus for about an hour you come to a pretty cove enclosed by wooded heights, where a spring of pure cold water bubbles up close to the sea, giving to the spot its name of *Tattu-su*, or the Sweet Water. From this bay a steep ascent of about a mile along an ancient paved road leads inland to a plateau. Here, threading your way through a labyrinth or petrified sea of jagged calcareous rocks, you suddenly find yourself on the brink of a vast chasm which yawns at your feet. This is the Corycian cave. In reality it is not a cave but an immense hollow or trough in the plateau, of oval shape and perhaps half a mile in circumference. The cliffs which enclose it vary from one hundred to over two hundred feet in depth. Its uneven bottom slopes throughout its whole length from north to south, and is covered by a thick jungle of trees and shrubs—myrtles, pomegranates, carobs, and many more, kept always fresh and green by rivulets, underground water, and the shadow of the great cliffs. A single narrow path leads down into its depths. The way is long and rough, but the deeper you descend the denser grows the vegetation, and it is under the dappled shade of whispering leaves and with the purling of brooks in your ears that you at last reach the bottom. The saffron which of old grew here among the bushes is no longer to be found, though it still flourishes in the surrounding district. This luxuriant bottom, with its rich verdure, its refreshing moisture, its grateful shade, is called Paradise by the wandering herdsmen. They

The city  
of Corycus.

The  
Corycian  
cave.

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Beaufort, *Karmania* (London, 1817), pp. 240 sq.

tether their camels and pasture their goats in it and come hither in the late summer to gather the ripe pomegranates. At the southern and deepest end of this great cliff-encircled hollow you come to the cavern proper. The ruins of a Byzantine church, which replaced a heathen temple, partly block the entrance. Inwards the cave descends with a gentle slope into the bowels of the earth. The old path paved with polygonal masonry still runs through it, but soon disappears under sand. At about two hundred feet from its mouth the cave comes to an end, and a tremendous roar of subterranean water is heard. By crawling on all fours you may reach a small pool arched by a dripping stalactite-hung roof, but the stream which makes the deafening din is invisible. It was otherwise in antiquity. A river of clear water burst from the rock, but only to vanish again into a chasm. Such changes in the course of streams are common in countries subject to earthquakes and to the disruption caused by volcanic agency. The ancients believed that this mysterious cavern was haunted ground. In the rumble and roar of the waters they seemed to hear the clash of cymbals touched by hands divine.<sup>1</sup>

Priests of  
Corycian  
Zeus.

If now, quitting the cavern, we return by the same path to the summit of the cliffs, we shall find on the plateau the ruins of a town and of a temple at the western edge of the great Corycian chasm. The wall of the holy precinct was built within a few feet of the precipices, and the sanctuary must have stood right over the actual cave and its subterranean waters. In later times the temple was

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 5, pp. 670 sq.; Mela, i. 72-75, ed. G. Parthey; J. T. Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) pp. 446-448; id., "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1890) pp. 212-214; R. Heberdey and A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-histor. Classe*, xlix. (1896) No. vi. pp. 70-79. Mr. D. G. Hogarth was so good as to furnish me with some notes

embodying his recollections of the Corycian cave. All these modern writers confirm the general accuracy of the descriptions of the cave given by Strabo and Mela. Mr. Hogarth indeed speaks of exaggeration in Mela's account, but this is not admitted by Mr. A. Wilhelm. As to the ruins of the city of Corycus on the coast, distant about three miles from the cave, see Fr. Beaufort, *Karmania* (London, 1817), pp. 232-238; R. Heberdey and A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* pp. 67-70.



converted into a Christian church. By pulling down a portion of the sacred edifice Mr. Bent had the good fortune to discover a Greek inscription containing a long list of names, probably those of the priests who superintended the worship. One name which meets us frequently in the list is Zas, and it is tempting to regard this as merely a dialectical form of Zeus. If that were so, the priests who bore the name might be supposed to personate the god.<sup>1</sup> But many strange and barbarous-looking names, evidently foreign, occur in the list, and Zas may be one of them. However, it is certain that Zeus was worshipped at the Corycian cave; for about half a mile from it, on the summit of a hill, are the ruins of a larger temple, which an inscription proves to have been dedicated to Corycian Zeus.<sup>2</sup>

But Zeus, or whatever native deity masqueraded under his name, did not reign alone in the deep dell. A more dreadful being haunted a still more awful abyss which opens in the ground only a hundred yards to the east of the great Corycian chasm. It is a circular cauldron, about a quarter of a mile in circumference, resembling the Corycian chasm in its general character, but smaller, deeper, and far more terrific in appearance. Its sides overhang and stalactites droop from them. There is no way down into it. The only mode of reaching the bottom, which is covered with vegetation, would be to be lowered at the end of a long rope. The nomads call this chasm Purgatory, to distinguish it from the other which they name Paradise. They say that there is a subterranean passage between the two, and that the smoke of a fire kindled in the Corycian cave may be seen curling out of the other. The one ancient writer who expressly mentions this second and more grisly cavern is Mela, who says that it was the lair of the giant Typhon, and that no animal let down into it could live.<sup>3</sup> Aeschylus

The cave  
of the  
giant  
Typhon.

<sup>1</sup> The suggestion is Mr. A. B. Cook's. See his article, "The European Sky-god," *Classical Review*, xvii. (1903) p. 418, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> J. T. Bent, in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii. (1890) p. 448; *id.*, in *Journal of*

*Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1890) pp. 214-216. For the inscription containing the names of the priests see R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* pp. 71-79; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 878; above, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Mela, i. 76, ed. G. Parthey. The

puts into the mouth of Prometheus an account of "the earth-born Typhon, dweller in Cicilian caves, dread monster, hundred-headed," who in his pride rose up against the gods, hissing destruction from his dreadful jaws, while from his Gorgon eyes the lightning flashed. But him a flaming levin bolt, crashing from heaven, smote to the very heart, and now he lies, shrivelled and scorched, under the weight of Etna by the narrow sea. Yet one day he will belch a fiery hail, a boiling angry flood, rivers of flame, to devastate the fat Sicilian fields.<sup>1</sup> This poetical description of the monster, confirmed by a similar passage of Pindar,<sup>2</sup> clearly proves that Typhon was conceived as a personification of those active volcanoes which spout fire and smoke to heaven as if they would assail the celestial gods. The Corycian caverns are not volcanic, but the ancients apparently regarded them as such, else they would hardly have made them the den of Typhon.

Battle of  
Zeus and  
Typhon.

According to one legend Typhon was a monster, half man and half brute, begotten in Cilicia by Tartarus upon the goddess Earth. The upper part of him was human, but from the loins downward he was an enormous snake. In the battle of the gods and giants, which was fought out in Egypt, Typhon hugged Zeus in his snaky coils, wrested from him his crooked sword, and with the blade cut the sinews of the god's hands and feet. Then taking him on his back he conveyed the mutilated deity across the sea to Cilicia, and deposited him in the Corycian cave. Here, too, he hid the severed sinews, wrapt in a bear's skin. But Hermes and Aegipan contrived to steal the missing thews and restore them to their divine owner. Thus made whole and strong again, Zeus pelted his beaten adversary with thunderbolts, drove him from place to place, and at last overwhelmed him under Mount Etna. And the spots where the hissing bolts fell are still marked by jets of flame.<sup>3</sup>

Fossil  
bones of  
extinct  
animals  
give rise  
to stories  
of giants.

cave of Typhon is described by J. T. Bent, *l.c.*

<sup>1</sup> Aeschylus, *Prometheus Vinctus*, 351-372.

<sup>2</sup> Pindar, *Pyth.* i. 30 sqq., who speaks of the giant as "bred in the many-named Cilician cave."

<sup>3</sup> Apollodorus, i. 6. 3.



giant at the Corycian cave. Such bones, as we have seen, are often found in limestone caverns, and the limestone gorges of Cilicia are in fact rich in fossils. The Arcadians laid the scene of the battle of the gods and the giants in the plain of Megalopolis, where many bones of mammoths have come to light, and where, moreover, flames have been seen to burst from the earth and even to burn for years.<sup>1</sup> These natural conditions would easily suggest a fable of giants who had fought the gods and had been slain by thunderbolts; the smouldering earth or jets of flame would be regarded as the spots where the divine lightnings had struck the ground. Hence the Arcadians sacrificed to thunder and lightning.<sup>2</sup> In Sicily, too, great quantities of bones of mammoths, elephants, hippopotamuses, and other animals long extinct in the island have been found, and have been appealed to with confidence by patriotic Sicilians as conclusive evidence of the gigantic stature of their ancestors or predecessors.<sup>3</sup> These remains of huge unwieldy creatures which once trampled through the jungle or splashed in the rivers of Sicily may have contributed with the fires of Etna to build up the story of giants imprisoned under the volcano and vomiting smoke and flame from its crater. "Tales of giants and monsters, which stand in direct contact with the finding of great fossil bones, are scattered broadcast over the mythology of the world. Huge bones, found at Punto Santa Elena, in the north of Guayaquil, have served as a foundation for the story of a colony of giants who dwelt there. The whole area of the Pampas is a great sepulchre of enormous extinct animals; no wonder that one great plain should be called the 'Field of the giants,' and that such names as 'the hill of the giant,' 'the stream of the animal,' should be guides to the geologist in his search for fossil bones."<sup>4</sup>

About five miles to the north-east of the Corycian caverns, but divided from them by many deep gorges and

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, viii. 29. 1, with my notes. Pausanias mentions (viii. 32. 5) bones of superhuman size which were preserved at Megalopolis, and which popular superstition identified as the bones of the giant Hopladamus.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, viii. 29. 1.

<sup>3</sup> A. Holm, *Geschichte Siciliens im Alterthum*, i. pp. 57, 356.

<sup>4</sup> E. B. Tylor, *Early History of Mankind*,<sup>2</sup> p. 222, who adduces much more evidence of the same sort.

Chasm of  
Olbian  
Zeus at  
Kanytel-  
ideis.

impassable rocks, is another and very similar chasm. It may be reached in about an hour and a quarter from the sea by an ancient paved road, which ascends at first very steeply and then gently through bush-clad and wooded hills. Thus you come to a stretch of level ground covered with the well-preserved ruins of an ancient town. Remains of fortresses constructed of polygonal masonry, stately churches, and many houses, together with numerous tombs and reliefs, finely chiselled in the calcareous limestone of the neighbourhood, bear witness to the extent and importance of the place. Yet it is mentioned by no ancient writer. Inscriptions prove that its name was Kanyteldeis or Kanytelideis, which still survives in the modern form of Kanidiwan. The great chasm opens in the very heart of the city. So crowded are the ruins that you do not perceive the abyss till you are within a few yards of it. It is almost a complete circle, about a quarter of a mile wide, three-quarters of a mile in circumference, and uniformly two hundred feet or more in depth. The cliffs go sheer down and remind the traveller of the great quarries at Syracuse. But like the Corycian caves, the larger of which it closely resembles, the huge fissure is natural; and its bottom, like theirs, is overgrown with trees and vegetation. Two ways led down into it in antiquity, both cut through the rock. One of them was a tunnel, which is now obstructed; the other is still open. Remains of columns and hewn stones in the bottom of the chasm seem to show that a temple once stood there. But there is no cave at the foot of the cliffs, and no stream flows in the deep hollow or can be heard to rumble underground. A ruined tower of polygonal masonry, which stands on the southern edge of the chasm, bears a Greek inscription stating that it was dedicated to Olbian Zeus by the priest Teucer, son of Tarkuaris. The letters are beautifully cut in the style of the third century before Christ. We may infer that at the time of the dedication the town belonged to the priestly kings of Olba, and that the great chasm was sacred to Olbian Zeus.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. T. Bent, "Explorations in Cilicia Tracheia," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, N.S. xii.

(1890) pp. 448 sq.; *id.*, "A Journey in Cilicia Tracheia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xii. (1891) pp. 208-210; R.



What, then, was the character of the god who was worshipped under the name of Zeus at these two great natural chasms? The depth of the fissures, opening suddenly and as it were without warning in the midst of a plateau, was well fitted to impress and awe the spectator; and the sight of the rank evergreen vegetation at their bottom, fed by rivulets or underground water, must have presented a striking contrast to the grey, barren, rocky wilderness of the surrounding tableland. Such a spot must have seemed to simple folk a paradise, a garden of God, the abode of higher powers who caused the wilderness to blossom, if not with roses, at least with myrtles and pomegranates for man, and with grass and underwood for his flocks. So to the Semite, as we saw, the Baal of the land is he who fertilises it by subterranean water rather than by rain from the sky, and who therefore dwells in the depths of earth rather than in the height of heaven.<sup>1</sup> In rainless countries the sky-god is deprived of one of the principal functions which he discharges in cool cloudy climates like that of Europe. He has, in fact, little or nothing to do with the water-supply, and has therefore small excuse for levying a water-rate on his worshippers. Not, indeed, that Cilicia is rainless; but in countries bordering on the Mediterranean the drought is almost unbroken through the long months of summer. Vegetation then withers: the face of nature is scorched and brown: most of the rivers dry up; and only their white stony beds, hot to the foot and dazzling to the eye, remain to tell where they flowed. It is at such seasons that a green hollow, a shady rock, a murmuring stream, are welcomed by the wanderer in the South with a joy and wonder which the untravelled Northerner can hardly imagine. Never do the broad slow rivers of England, with their winding reaches, their grassy banks, their grey willows mirrored with the soft English sky in the placid stream, appear so beautiful as when the traveller views them for the first time after leaving behind him the aridity, the

The deity of these great chasms was called Zeus by the Greeks, but he was probably a god of fertility embodied in vegetation and water.

<sup>1</sup> Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Dunkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*,

*Philosophisch-historische Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896) No. vi. pp. 51-61.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 22-24.

heat, the blinding glare of the white southern landscape, set in seas and skies of caerulean blue.

Analogy  
of the  
Corycian  
and Olbian  
caverns to  
Ibreez and  
the vale  
of the  
Adonis.

We may take it, then, as probable that the god of the Corycian and Olbian caverns was worshipped as a source of fertility. In antiquity, when the river, which now roars underground, still burst from the rock in the Corycian cave, the scene must have resembled Ibreez, where the god of the corn and the vine was adored at the source of the stream; and we may compare the vale of Adonis in the Lebanon, where the divinity who gave his name to the river was revered at its foaming cascades. The three landscapes had in common the elements of luxuriant vegetation and copious streams leaping full-born from the rock. We shall hardly err in supposing that these features shaped the conception of the deities who were supposed to haunt the favoured spots. At the Corycian cave the existence of a second chasm, of a frowning and awful aspect, might well suggest the presence of an evil being who lurked in it and sought to undo the beneficent work of the good god. Thus we should have a fable of a conflict between the two, a battle of Zeus and Typhon.

Two gods  
at Olba,  
perhaps a  
father and  
a son, cor-  
responding  
to the  
Baal and  
Sandan of  
Tarsus.

On the whole we conclude that the Olbian Zeus, worshipped at one of these great limestone chasms, and clearly identical in nature with the Corycian Zeus, was also identical with the Baal of Tarsus, the god of the corn and the vine, who in his turn can hardly be separated from the god of Ibreez. If my conjecture is right the native name of the Olbian Zeus was Tark or Trok, and the priestly Teucers of Olba represented him in their own persons. On that hypothesis the Olbian priests who bore the name of Ajax embodied another native deity of unknown name, perhaps the father or the son of Tark. A comparison of the coin-types of Tarsus with the Hittite monuments of Ibreez and Boghaz-Keui led us to the conclusion that the people of Tarsus worshipped at least two distinct gods, a father and a son, the father-god being known to the Semites as Baal and to the Greeks as Zeus, while the son was called Sandan by the natives, but Hercules by the Greeks. We may surmise that at Olba the names of Teucer and Ajax designated two gods who corresponded in type to the two



gods of Tarsus; and if the lesser figure at Ibreez, who appears in an attitude of adoration before the deity of the corn and the vine, could be interpreted as the divine Son in presence of the divine Father, we should have in all three places the same pair of deities, represented probably in the flesh by successive generations of priestly kings. But the evidence is far too slender to justify us in advancing this hypothesis as anything more than a bare conjecture.

### § 8. Cilician Goddesses

So far, the Cilician deities discussed have been males; we have as yet found no trace of the great Mother Goddess who plays so important a part in the religion of Cappadocia and Phrygia, beyond the great dividing range of the Taurus. Yet we may suspect that she was not unknown in Cilicia, though her worship certainly seems to have been far less prominent there than in the centre of Asia Minor. The difference may perhaps be interpreted as evidence that mother-kin and hence the predominance of Mother Goddesses survived in the bleak highlands of the interior, long after a genial climate and teeming soil had fostered the growth of a higher civilisation, and with it the advance from female to male kinship, in the rich lowlands of Cilicia. Be that as it may, Cilician goddesses with or without a male partner are known to have been revered in various parts of the country.

Thus at Tarsus itself the goddess 'Atheh was worshipped along with Baal; their effigies are engraved on the same coins of the city. She is represented wearing a veil and seated upon a lion, with her name in Aramaic letters engraved beside her.<sup>1</sup> Hence it would seem that at Tarsus, as at Boghaz-Keui, the Father God mated with a lion-goddess like the Phrygian Cybele or the Syrian Atargatis. Now the name Atargatis is a Greek rendering of the Aramaic 'Athar-'atheh, a compound word which includes the name of the goddess of

Goddesses less prominent than gods in Cilician religion.

The goddess 'Atheh, partner of Baal at Tarsus, seems to have been a form of Atargatis.

<sup>1</sup> B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, p. 616. [However, Mr. G. F. Hill writes to me: "The attribution to Tarsus of the 'Atheh coins is unfounded. Head himself only gives it

as doubtful. I should think they belong further East." In the uncertainty which prevails on this point I have left the text unchanged. *Note to Second Edition.*]

The lion-goddess and the bull-god.

Tarsus.<sup>1</sup> Thus in name as well as in attributes the female partner of the Baal of Tarsus appears to correspond to Atargatis, the Syrian Mother Goddess whose image, seated on a lion or lions, was worshipped with great pomp and splendour at Hierapolis-Bambyce near the Euphrates.<sup>2</sup> May we go a step farther and find a correspondence between the Baal of Tarsus and the husband-god of Atargatis at Hierapolis-Bambyce? That husband-god, like the Baal of Tarsus, was identified by the Greeks with Zeus, and Lucian tells us that the resemblance of his image to the images of Zeus was in all respects unmistakable. But his image, unlike those of Zeus, was seated upon bulls.<sup>3</sup> In point of fact he was probably Hadad, the chief male god of the Syrians, who is supposed to have been a god of thunder and fertility; for his image at Heliopolis grasped in his left hand a thunderbolt and ears of corn,<sup>4</sup> and at Zenjirli he is represented with a bearded human head and horns, the emblem of strength and fertility.<sup>5</sup> Now we have seen that

<sup>1</sup> The name 'Athar-atheh occurs in a Palmyrene inscription. See G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 112, pp. 267-270. In analysing Atargatis into 'Athar-atheh (Atar-ata) I follow E. Meyer (*Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. § 205, p. 247), F. Baethgen (*Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 68-75), G. A. Cooke (*l.c.*), C. P. Tiele (*Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 245), F. Hommel (*Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orient*, pp. 43 sq.), and Father Lagrange (*Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> p. 130). In the great temple at Hierapolis-Bambyce a mysterious golden image stood between the images of Atargatis and her male partner. It resembled neither of them, yet combined the attributes of other gods. Some interpreted it as Dionysus, others as Deucalion, and others as Semiramis; for a golden dove, traditionally associated with Semiramis, was perched on the head of the figure. The Syrians called the image by a name which Lucian translates "sign" (σημειον). See Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 33. It has

been plausibly conjectured by F. Baethgen that the name which Lucian translates "sign" was really 'Athheh (אֶתְהַ), which could easily be confused with the Syriac word for "sign" (כֶּתֶב). See F. Baethgen, *op. cit.* p. 73. The modern writers cited in this note have interpreted this Syrian 'Athheh as a male god, the lover of Atargatis, and identical in name and character with the Phrygian Attis. They may be right; but none of them seems to have noticed that the same name 'Athheh (אֶתְהַ) is applied to a goddess at Tarsus.

<sup>2</sup> As to the image, see above, pp. 105 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 23. 12 and 17-19.

<sup>5</sup> G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 164. On Hadad as the Syrian thunder-god see F. Baethgen, *Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 66-68; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Alterthum*, i. 248 sq.; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 92 sq. That Hadad was the consort of Atargatis at Hierapolis-



the god of Ibreez, whose attributes tally with those of the Baal of Tarsus, wears a cap adorned with bull's horns;<sup>1</sup> that the Father God at Boghaz-Keui, meeting the Mother Goddess on her lioness, is attended by an animal which according to the usual interpretation is a bull;<sup>2</sup> and that the bull itself was worshipped, apparently as an emblem of fertility, at Euyuk near Boghaz-Keui.<sup>3</sup> Thus at Tarsus and Boghaz-Keui, as at Hierapolis-Bambyce, the Father God and the Mother Goddess would seem to have had as their sacred animals or emblems the bull and the lion respectively.

In later times, under Greek influence, the goddess was apparently exchanged for, or converted into, the Fortune of the City, who appears on coins of Tarsus as a seated woman with veiled and turreted head, grasping ears of corn and a poppy in her hand. Her lion is gone, but a trace of him perhaps remains on a coin which exhibits the throne of the goddess adorned with a lion's leg.<sup>4</sup> In general it would seem that the goddess Fortune, who figures commonly as the guardian of cities in the Greek East, especially in Syria, was nothing but a disguised form of Gad, the Semitic god of fortune or luck, who, though the exigencies of grammar required him to be masculine, is supposed to have been often merely a special aspect of the great goddess Astarte or Atargatis conceived as the patroness and protector of towns.<sup>5</sup> In Oriental religion such permutations or combinations need not surprise us. To the gods all things are possible. In Cyprus the goddess of love wore a beard,<sup>6</sup> and Alexander the Great sometimes disported himself in the costume of Artemis, while at other times he ransacked the divine wardrobe to figure in the garb of Hercules, of Hermes, and of Ammon.<sup>7</sup> The change of the goddess 'Atheh of Tarsus into Gad or Fortune would be easy if we suppose

In later times the old goddess became the Fortune of the City.

Bambyce is the opinion of P. Jensen (*Hittiter und Armenier*, p. 171), who also indicates his character as a god both of thunder and of fertility (*ib.* p. 167).

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 94, 96.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycania, Laauria, and Cilicia*, pp. 181, 182, 185, 188, 190, 228.

<sup>5</sup> E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 246 sq.; F. Baethgen, *Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 76 sqq. The idolatrous Hebrews spread tables for Gad, that is, for Fortune (Isaiah lxx. 11, Revised Version).

<sup>6</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* iii. 8. 2; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 632.

<sup>7</sup> Ehippus, cited by Athenaeus, xii. 53; p. 537.

that she was known as Gad-'Atheh, "Luck of 'Atheh," which occurs as a Semitic personal name.<sup>1</sup> In like manner the goddess of Fortune at Olba, who had her small temple beside the great temple of Zeus,<sup>2</sup> may have been originally the consort of the native god Tark or Tarku.

The  
Phoenician  
god El and  
his wife at  
Mallus in  
Cilicia.

Another town in Cilicia where an Oriental god and goddess appear to have been worshipped together was Mallus. The city was built on a height in the great Cilician plain near the mouth of the river Pyramus.<sup>3</sup> Its coins exhibit two winged deities, a male and a female, in a kneeling or running attitude. On some of the coins the male deity is represented, like Janus, with two heads facing opposite ways, and with two pairs of wings, while beneath him is the forepart of a bull with a human head. The obverse of the coins which bear the female deity display a conical stone, sometimes flanked by two bunches of grapes.<sup>4</sup> This conical stone, like those of other Asiatic cities,<sup>5</sup> was probably the emblem of a Mother Goddess, and the bunches of grapes indicate her fertilising powers. The god with the two heads and four wings can hardly be any other than the Phoenician El, whom the Greeks called Cronus; for El was characterised by four eyes, two in front and two behind, and by three pairs of wings.<sup>6</sup> A discrepancy in the number of wings can scarcely be deemed fatal to the identification. The god may easily have moulted some superfluous feathers on the road from

<sup>1</sup> F. Baethgen, *op. cit.* p. 77; G. A. Cooke, *Text-book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 16, p. 675.

<sup>4</sup> B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, pp. 605 sq.; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. cxvii. sqq., 95-98, plates xv. xvi. xl. 9; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, ii. 536 sq., pl. lix. 11-14. The male and female figures appear on separate coins. The attribution to Mallus of the coins with the female figure and conical stone has been questioned by Messrs. J. P. Six and G. F. Hill. I follow the view of Messrs. F. Imhoof-Blumer and B. V. Head. [However, Mr. G. F. Hill writes to me that the attribution of these

coins to Mallus is no longer maintained by any one. Imhoof-Blumer himself now conjecturally assigns them to Aphrodisias in Cilicia, and Mr. Hill regards this conjecture as very plausible. See F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Kleinasiatische Münzen* (Vienna, 1901-1902), ii. 435 sq. In the uncertainty which still prevails on the subject I have left the text unchanged. For my purpose it matters little whether this Cilician goddess was worshipped at Mallus or at Aphrodisias. *Note to Second Edition.*]

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 30 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Philo of Byblus, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 569. El is figured with three pairs of wings on coins of Byblus. See G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, ii. 174; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Semitiques*,<sup>2</sup> p. 72.



Phoenicia to Mallus. On later coins of Mallus these quaint Oriental deities disappear, and are replaced by corresponding Greek deities, particularly by a head of Cronus on one side and a figure of Demeter, grasping ears of corn, on the other.<sup>1</sup> The change doubtless sprang from a wish to assimilate the ancient native divinities to the new and fashionable divinities of the Greek pantheon. If Cronus and Demeter, the harvest god and goddess, were chosen to supplant El and his female consort, the ground of the choice must certainly have been a supposed resemblance between the two pairs of deities. We may assume, therefore, that the discarded couple, El and his wife, had also been worshipped by the husbandman as sources of fertility, the givers of corn and wine. One of these later coins of Mallus exhibits Dionysus sitting on a vine laden with ripe clusters, while on the obverse is seen a male figure guiding a yoke of oxen as if in the act of ploughing.<sup>2</sup> These types of the vine-god and the ploughman probably represent another attempt to adapt the native religion to changed conditions, to pour the old Asiatic wine into new Greek bottles. The barbarous monster with the multiplicity of heads and wings has been reduced to a perfectly human Dionysus. The sacred but deplorable old conical stone no longer flaunts proudly on the coins; it has retired to a decent obscurity in favour of a natural and graceful vine. It is thus that a truly progressive theology keeps pace with the march of intellect. But if these things were done by the apostles of culture at Mallus, we cannot suppose that the clergy of Tarsus, the capital, lagged behind their provincial brethren in their efforts to place the ancient faith upon a sound modern basis. The fruit of their labours seems to have been the more or less nominal substitution of Zeus, Fortune, and Hercules for Baal, 'Atheh, and Sandan.<sup>3</sup>

Assimilation of native Oriental deities to Greek divinities.

<sup>1</sup> Imhoof-Blumer, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1572; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia*, pp. cxxii. 99, pl. xvii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> G. F. Hill, *op. cit.* pp. cxxi. 19, 98, pl. xvii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Another native Cilician deity who

masqueraded in Greek dress was probably the Olybrian Zeus of Anazarba or Anazarbus, but of his true nature and worship we know nothing. See W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 577; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. 'Aḏara (where the MS. reading 'Ολυββος was wrongly changed by Salmasius into 'Ολυμπιος).

Sarpedonian  
Artemis.

The  
goddess  
Perasia at  
Hieropolis-  
Castabala.

We may suspect that in like manner the Sarpedonian Artemis, who had a sanctuary in South-eastern Cilicia, near the Syrian border, was really a native goddess parading in borrowed plumes. She gave oracular responses by the mouth of inspired men, or more probably of women, who in their moments of divine ecstasy were probably deemed incarnations of her divinity.<sup>1</sup> Another even more transparently Asiatic goddess was Perasia, or Artemis Perasia, who was worshipped at Hieropolis-Castabala in Eastern Cilicia. The extensive ruins of the ancient city, now known as Bodroum, cover the slope of a hill about three-quarters of a mile to the north of the river Pyramus. Above them towers the acropolis, built on the summit of dark grey precipices, and divided from the neighbouring mountain by a deep cutting in the rock. A mediaeval castle, built of hewn blocks of reddish-yellow limestone, has replaced the ancient citadel. The city possessed a large theatre, and was traversed by two handsome colonnades, of which some columns are still standing among the ruins. A thick growth of brushwood and grass now covers most of the site, and the place is wild and solitary. Only the wandering herdsmen encamp near the deserted city in winter and spring. The neighbourhood is treeless; yet in May magnificent fields of wheat and barley gladden the eye, and in the valleys the clover grows as high as the horses' knees.<sup>2</sup> The ambiguous nature of the goddess who presided over this City of the

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 19, p. 676. The expression of Strabo leaves it doubtful whether the ministers of the goddess were men or women. There was a headland called Sarpedon near the mouth of the Calycadnus River in Western Cilicia (Strabo, xiii. 4. 6, p. 627, xiv. 5. 4, p. 670), where Sarpedon or Sarpedonian Apollo had a temple and an oracle. The temple was hewn in the rock, and contained an image of the god. See R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiser. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosoph.-histor. Classe*, xlv. (Vienna, 1896) No. vi. pp. 100, 107. Probably this Sarpedonian Apollo was a native deity akin to Sarpedonian Artemis.

<sup>2</sup> E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, pp. 128-134; J. T. Bent, "Recent Discoveries in Eastern Cilicia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xi. (1890), pp. 234 *sq.*; E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Eastern Cilicia," *ibid.* pp. 243 *sqq.*; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* pp. 25 *sqq.* The site of Hieropolis-Castabala was first identified by J. T. Bent by means of inscriptions. As to the coins of the city, see Fr. Imhoof-Blumer, "Zur Münzkunde Kilikiens," *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, x. (1883) pp. 267-290; G. F. Hill, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycania, Iauria, and Cilicia*, pp. c. cii. 82-84, pl. xiv. 1-6; G. Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, ii. 534 *sq.*



Sanctuary (*Hieropolis*)<sup>1</sup> was confessed by a puzzled worshipper, a physician named Lucius Minius Claudianus, who confided his doubts to the deity herself in some very indifferent Greek verses. He wisely left it to the goddess to say whether she was Artemis, or the Moon, or Hecate, or Aphrodite, or Demeter.<sup>2</sup> All that we know about her is that her true name was Perasia, and that she was in the enjoyment of certain revenues.<sup>3</sup> Further, we may reasonably conjecture that at the Cilician Castabala she was worshipped with rites like those which were held in honour of her namesake Artemis Perasia at another city of the same name, Castabala in Cappadocia. There, as we saw, the priestesses of the goddess walked over fire with bare feet unscathed.<sup>4</sup> Probably the same impressive ceremony was performed before a crowd of worshippers in the Cilician Castabala also. Whatever the exact meaning of the rite may have been, the goddess was in all probability one of those Asiatic Mother Goddesses to whom the Greeks often applied the name of Artemis;<sup>5</sup> and grounds have been shown for thinking that the walk through the fire was a mitigation of an older custom of burning

The fire-walk in the worship of Perasia.

<sup>1</sup> On the difference between Hieropolis and Hierapolis see W. M. Ramsay, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor*, pp. 84 sq. According to him, the cities designated by such names grew up gradually round a sanctuary; where Greek influence prevailed the city in time eclipsed the sanctuary and became known as Hierapolis, or the Sacred City, but where the native element retained its predominance the city continued to be known as Hieropolis, or the City of the Sanctuary.

<sup>2</sup> E. L. Hicks, "Inscriptions from Eastern Cilicia," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xi. (1890) pp. 251-253; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* p. 26. These writers differ somewhat in their reading and restoration of the verses, which are engraved on a limestone basis among the ruins. I follow the version of Messrs. Heberdey and Wilhelm.

<sup>3</sup> J. T. Bent and E. L. Hicks, *op. cit.* pp. 235, 246 sq.; R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, xii. 2. 7, p. 537. See above, p. 89. The Cilician Castabala, the situation of which is identified by inscriptions, is not mentioned by Strabo. It is very unlikely that, with his intimate knowledge of Asia Minor, he should have erred so far as to place the city in Cappadocia, to the north of the Taurus mountains, instead of in Cilicia, to the south of them. It is more probable that there were two cities of the same name, and that Strabo has omitted to mention one of them. Similarly, there were two cities called Comana, one in Cappadocia and one in Pontus; at both places the same goddess was worshipped with similar rites. See Strabo, xii. 2. 3, p. 535, xii. 3. 32, p. 557. The situation of the various Castabalas mentioned by ancient writers is discussed by F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, x. (1883) pp. 285-288.

<sup>5</sup> See my article "Artemis and Hippolytus," *Fortnightly Review*, December 1904, p. 993.

Insensibility to pain regarded as a mark of inspiration.

human victims to death.<sup>1</sup> The immunity enjoyed by the priestess in the furnace was attributed to her inspiration by the deity. In discussing the nature of inspiration or possession by a deity, the Syrian philosopher Jamblichus notes as one of its symptoms a total insensibility to pain. Many inspired persons, he tells us, "are not burned by fire, the fire not taking hold of them by reason of the divine inspiration; and many, though they are burned, perceive it not, because at the time they do not live an animal life. They pierce themselves with skewers and feel nothing. They gash their backs with hatchets, they slash their arms with daggers, and know not what they do, because their acts are not those of mere men. For impassable places become passable to those who are filled with the spirit. They rush into fire, they pass through fire, they cross rivers, like the priestess at Castabala. These things prove that under the influence of inspiration men are beside themselves, that their senses, their will, their life are those neither of man nor of beast, but that they lead another and a diviner life instead, whereby they are inspired and wholly possessed."<sup>2</sup> Thus in traversing the fiery furnace the priestesses of Perasia were believed to be beside themselves, to be filled with the goddess, to be in a real sense incarnations of her divinity.<sup>3</sup>

A similar touchstone of inspiration is still applied by some villagers in the Himalayan districts of North-western India. Once a year they worship Airi, a local deity, who is represented by a trident and has his temples on lonely hills and desolate tracks. At his festival the people seat themselves in a circle about a bonfire. A kettle-drum is beaten,

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 88 *sq.*

<sup>2</sup> Jamblichus, *De mysteriis*, iii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Another Cilician goddess was Athena of Magarsus, to whom Alexander the Great sacrificed before the battle of Issus. See Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 5. 9; Stephanus Byzantius, *s.v.* *Μάγασρος*; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 444. The name of the city seems to be Oriental, perhaps derived from the Semitic word for "cave" (*ḥayyā*). As to the importance of caves in Semitic religion, see W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 197-199.

The site of Magarsus appears to be at Karatash, a hill rising from the sea at the southern extremity of the Cilician plain, about forty-five miles due south of Adana. The walls of the city, built of great limestone blocks, are standing to a height of several courses, and an inscription which mentions the priests of Magarsian Athena has been found on the spot. See R. Heberdey und A. Wilhelm, "Reisen in Kilikien," *Denkschriften der kaiserl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosoph.-histor. Classe*, xlv. (1896) No. vi. pp. 6-10.



and one by one his worshippers become possessed by the god and leap with shouts round the flames. Some brand themselves with heated iron spoons and sit down in the fire. Such as escape unhurt are believed to be truly inspired, while those who burn themselves are despised as mere pretenders to the divine frenzy. Persons thus possessed by the spirit are called Airi's horses or his slaves. During the revels, which commonly last about ten days, they wear red scarves round their heads and receive alms from the faithful. These men deem themselves so holy that they will let nobody touch them, and they alone may touch the sacred trident, the emblem of their god.<sup>1</sup> In Western Asia itself modern fanatics still practise the same austerities which were practised by their brethren in the days of Jamblichus. "Asia Minor abounds in dervishes of different orders, who lap red-hot iron, calling it their 'rose,' chew coals of living fire, strike their heads against solid walls, stab themselves in the cheek, the scalp, the temple, with sharp spikes set in heavy weights, shouting 'Allah, Allah,' and always consistently avowing that during such frenzy they are entirely insensible to pain."<sup>2</sup>

### § 9. *The Burning of Cilician Gods*

On the whole, then, we seem to be justified in concluding that under a thin veneer of Greek humanity the barbarous native gods of Cilicia continued long to survive, and that among them the great Asiatic goddess retained a place, though not the prominent place which she held in the highlands of the interior down at least to the beginning of our era. The principle that the inspired priest or priestess represents the deity in person appears, if I am right, to have been recognised at Castabala and at Olba, as well as at the sanctuary of Sarpedonian Artemis. There can be no intrinsic improbability, therefore, in the view that at Tarsus also the divine triad of Baal, 'Atheh,

The divine triad, Baal, 'Atheh, and Sandan, at Tarsus may have been personated by priests and priestesses.

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Districts of the North-Western Provinces of India*, ii. (Allahabad, 1884) pp. 826 sq.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. G. E. White (Missionary at Marsovan, in the ancient Pontus), in a letter to me dated 19 Southmoor Road, Oxford, February 11, 1907.

and Sandan may have been personated by priests and priestesses, who, on the analogy of Olba and of the great sanctuaries in the interior of Asia Minor, would originally be at the same time kings and queens, princes and princesses. Further, the burning of Sandan in effigy at Tarsus would, on this hypothesis, answer to the walk of the priestess of Perasia through the furnace at Castabala. Both were, if I am right, mitigations of a custom of putting the priestly king or queen, or another member of the royal family, to death by fire.



## CHAPTER VII

### SARDANAPALUS AND HERCULES

#### § 1. *The Burning of Sardanapalus*

THE theory that kings or princes were formerly burned to death at Tarsus in the character of gods is singularly confirmed by another and wholly independent line of argument. For, according to one account, the city of Tarsus was founded not by Sandan but by Sardanapalus, the famous Assyrian monarch whose death on a great pyre was one of the most famous incidents in Oriental legend. Near the sea, within a day's march of Tarsus, might be seen in antiquity the ruins of a great ancient city named Anchiale, and outside its walls stood a monument called the monument of Sardanapalus, on which was carved in stone the figure of the monarch. He was represented snapping the fingers of his right hand, and the gesture was explained by an accompanying inscription, engraved in Assyrian characters, to the following effect:—"Sardanapalus, son of Anacyndaraxes, built Anchiale and Tarsus in one day. Eat, drink, and play, for everything else is not worth that," by which was implied that all other human affairs were not worth a snap of the fingers.<sup>1</sup> The gesture may have been misin-

Tarsus said to have been founded by the Assyrian king Sardanapalus, who burned himself on a pyre.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 5. 9, pp. 671 sq.; Arrian, *Anabasis*, ii. 5; Athenaeus, xii. 39, p. 530 A, B. Compare Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Ἀγγιδλή; Syncellus, *Chronographia*, vol. i. p. 312, ed. G. Dindorf. The site of Anchiale has not yet been discovered. At Tarsus itself the ruins of a vast quadrangular structure have sometimes been identified

with the monument of Sardanapalus. See E. J. Davis, *Life in Asiatic Turkey*, pp. 37-39; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 536 sqq. But Mr. D. G. Hogarth tells me that the ruins in question seem to be the concrete foundations of a Roman temple. The mistake had already been pointed out by Mr. R.

terpreted and the inscription mistranslated,<sup>1</sup> but there is no reason to doubt the existence of such a monument, though we may conjecture that it was of Hittite rather than Assyrian origin; for, not to speak of the traces of Hittite art and religion which we have found at Tarsus, a group of Hittite monuments has been discovered at Marash, in the upper valley of the Pyramus.<sup>2</sup> The Assyrians may have ruled over Cilicia for a time, but Hittite influence was probably much deeper and more lasting.<sup>3</sup> The story that Tarsus was founded by Sardanapalus may well be apocryphal,<sup>4</sup> but there must have been some reason for his association with the city. On the present hypothesis that reason is to be found in the traditional manner of his death. To avoid falling into the hands of the rebels, who laid siege to Nineveh, he built a huge pyre in his palace, heaped it up with gold and silver and purple raiment, and then burnt himself, his wife, his concubines, and his eunuchs in the fire.<sup>5</sup> The story is false of the historical Sardanapalus, that is, of the great Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, but it is true of his brother Shamashshumukin. Being appointed king of Babylon by Ashurbanipal, he revolted against his suzerain and benefactor, and was besieged by him in his capital. The siege was long and the resistance desperate, for the Babylonians knew that they had no mercy to expect from the ruthless Assyrians. But they were decimated by famine and pestilence, and when the city could hold out no more, King Shamashshumukin, determined not to fall alive

Deaths of  
Babylonian  
and  
Assyrian  
kings on  
the pyre.

Koldewey. See his article, "Das sogenannte Grab des Sardanapal zu Tarsus," *Aus der Anomia* (Berlin, 1890), pp. 178-185.

<sup>1</sup> See Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 542 sq. They think that the figure probably represented the king in a common attitude of adoration, his right arm raised and his thumb resting on his forefinger.

<sup>2</sup> L. Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hittiticarum*, pp. 17-19, plates xxi-xxv; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 492, 494 sq., 528-530, 547.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. W. Max Müller is of opinion

that the Hittite civilisation and the Hittite system of writing were developed in Cilicia rather than in Cappadocia (*Asien und Europa*, p. 350).

<sup>4</sup> According to Berosus and Abydenus it was not Sardanapalus (Ashurbanipal) but Sennacherib who built or rebuilt Tarsus after the fashion of Babylon, causing the river Cydnus to flow through the midst of the city. See *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 504, iv. 282; C. P. Tiele, *Babylonisch-assyrische Geschichte*, pp. 297 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Diodorus Siculus, ii. 27; Athenaeus, xii. 38, p. 529; Justin, i. 3.



into the hands of his offended brother, shut himself up in his palace, and there burned himself to death, along with his wives, his children, his slaves, and his treasures, at the very moment when the conquerors were breaking in the gates.<sup>1</sup> Not many years afterwards the same tragedy was repeated at Nineveh itself by Saracus or Sinsharishkun, the last king of Assyria. Besieged by the rebel Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, and by Cyaxares, king of the Medes, he burned himself in his palace. That was the end of Nineveh and of the Assyrian empire.<sup>2</sup> Thus Greek history preserved the memory of the catastrophe, but transferred it from the real victims to the far more famous Ashurbanipal, whose figure in after ages loomed vast and dim against the setting sun of Assyrian glory.

### § 2. *The Burning of Croesus*

Another Oriental monarch who prepared at least to die in the flames was Croesus, king of Lydia. Herodotus tells how the Persians under Cyrus captured Sardes, the Lydian capital, and took Croesus alive, and how Cyrus caused a great pyre to be erected, on which he placed the captive monarch in fetters, and with him twice seven Lydian youths. Fire was then applied to the pile, but at the last moment Cyrus relented, a sudden shower extinguished the flames, and Croesus was spared.<sup>3</sup> But it is most improbable that the Persians, with their profound reverence for the sanctity of fire, should have thought of defiling the sacred element with the worst of all pollutions, the contact of dead bodies.<sup>4</sup> Such an act would have seemed to them sacrilege of the deepest dye. For to them fire was the earthly form of the

Story that  
Cyrus  
intended  
to burn  
Croesus  
alive.

It is  
unlikely  
that the  
Persians  
would thus  
have  
polluted  
the sacred  
element  
of fire.

<sup>1</sup> G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, iii. 422 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Abydenus, in *Fragment. Histor. Græc.*, ed. C. Müller, iv. 282; Syncellus, *Chronographia*, i. p. 396, ed. G. Dindorf; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 576 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, iii. 482-485. C. P. Tiele thought that the story of the death of Saracus might be a popular but mistaken duplicate of the death

of Shamashshumoukin (*Babylonisch-assyrische Geschichte*, pp. 410 sq.). Zimri, king of Israel, also burned himself in his palace to escape falling into the hands of his enemies (1 Kings xvi. 18).

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, i. 86 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), p. 274.

heavenly light, the eternal, the infinite, the divine ; death, on the other hand, was in their opinion the main source of corruption and uncleanness. Hence they took the most stringent precautions to guard the purity of fire from the defilement of death.<sup>1</sup> If a man or a dog died in a house where the holy fire burned, the fire had to be removed from the house and kept away for nine nights in winter or a month in summer before it might be brought back ; and if any man broke the rule by bringing back the fire within the appointed time, he might be punished with two hundred stripes.<sup>2</sup> As for burning a corpse in the fire, it was the most heinous of all sins, an invention of Ahriman, the devil ; there was no atonement for it, and it was punished with death.<sup>3</sup> Nor did the law remain a dead letter. Down to the beginning of our era the death penalty was inflicted on all who threw a corpse or cow-dung on the fire, nay, even on such as blew on the fire with their breath.<sup>4</sup> It is hard, therefore, to believe that a Persian king should have commanded his subjects to perpetrate a deed which he and they viewed with horror as the most flagitious sacrilege conceivable.

The older and truer tradition was that in the extremity of his fortunes Croesus attempted to burn himself.

Another and in some respects truer version of the story of Croesus and Cyrus has been preserved by two older witnesses—namely, by the Greek poet Bacchylides, who was born some forty years after the event,<sup>5</sup> and by a Greek artist who painted the scene on a red-figured vase about, or soon after, the time of the poet's birth. Bacchylides tells us that when the Persians captured Sardes, Croesus, unable to brook the thought of slavery, caused a pyre to be erected in front of his courtyard, mounted it with his wife and daughters, and bade a page apply a light to the wood. A bright blaze shot up, but Zeus extinguished it with rain from heaven, and Apollo of the Golden Sword wafted the pious king and his

<sup>1</sup> J. Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta*, vol. i. pp. lxxxvi., lxxxviii.-xc. (*Sacred Books of the East*, iv.).

<sup>2</sup> *Zend-Avesta*, Vendidad, Fargard, v. 7. 39-44 (*Sacred Books of the East*, iv. 60 sq.).

<sup>3</sup> *Zend-Avesta*, translated by J. Darmesteter, i. pp. xc. 9, 110 sq. (*Sacred Books of the East*, iv.).

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, xv. 3. 14, p. 732. Even

gold, on account of its resemblance to fire, might not be brought near a corpse (*id.* xv. 3. 18, p. 734).

<sup>5</sup> Sardes fell in the autumn of 546 B.C. (E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 604). Bacchylides was probably born between 512 and 505 B.C. (R. C. Jebb, *Bacchylides, the Poems and Fragments*, pp. 1 sq.).



daughters to the happy land beyond the North Wind.<sup>1</sup> In like manner the vase-painter clearly represents the burning of Croesus as a voluntary act, not as a punishment inflicted on him by the conqueror. He lets us see the king enthroned upon the pyre with a wreath of laurel on his head and a sceptre in one hand, while with the other he is pouring a libation. An attendant is in the act of applying to the pile two objects which have been variously interpreted as torches to kindle the wood or whisks to sprinkle holy water. The demeanour of the king is solemn and composed: he seems to be performing a religious rite, not suffering an ignominious death.<sup>2</sup>

Thus we may fairly conclude with some eminent modern scholars<sup>3</sup> that in the extremity of his fortunes Croesus prepared to meet death like a king or a god in the flames. It was thus that Hercules, from whom the old kings of Lydia claimed to be sprung,<sup>4</sup> ascended from earth to heaven: it was thus that Zimri, king of Israel, passed beyond the reach of his enemies: it was thus that Shamashshumukin, king of Babylon, escaped a brother's vengeance: it was thus that the last king of Assyria expired in the ruins of his capital; and it was thus that, sixty-six years after the capture of Sardes, the Carthaginian king Hamilcar sought to retrieve a lost battle by a hero's death.<sup>5</sup>

Semiramis herself, the legendary queen of Assyria, is said to have burnt herself on a pyre out of grief at the death of a favourite horse.<sup>6</sup> Since there are strong grounds for regarding her as a form of Ishtar or Astarte,<sup>7</sup> the legend that

Legend  
that  
Semiramis  
burnt  
herself  
on a pyre.

<sup>1</sup> Bacchylides, iii. 24-62.

<sup>2</sup> F. G. Welcker, *Alte Denkmäler*, iii. pl. xxxiii.; A. Baumeister, *Denkmäler des klassischen Alterthums*, ii. 796, fig. 860; A. H. Smith, "Illustrations to Bacchylides," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) pp. 267-269; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, iii. 618 sq. It is true that Cambyses caused the dead body of the Egyptian king Amasis to be dragged from the tomb, mangled, and burned; but the deed is expressly branded by the ancient historian as an outrage on Persian religion (Herodotus, iii. 16).

<sup>3</sup> Raoul-Rochette, "Sur l'Hercule

Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 277 sq.; M. Duncker, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iv.<sup>2</sup> 330-332; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 604; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, iii. 618.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, i. 7.

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 89 sq., 140 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Hyginus, *Fab.* 243; Pliny, viii.

155.

<sup>7</sup> See W. Robertson Smith, "Ctesias and the Semiramis Legend," *English Historical Review*, ii. (1887) pp. 303-317.

Semiramis died for love in the flames furnishes a remarkable parallel to the traditionary death of the love-lorn Dido, who herself appears to be simply an Avatar of the same great Asiatic goddess.<sup>1</sup> When we compare these stories of the burning of Semiramis and Dido with each other and with the historical cases of the burning of Oriental monarchs, we may perhaps conclude that there was a time when queens as well as kings were expected under certain circumstances, perhaps on the death of their consort, to perish in the fire. The conclusion can hardly be deemed extravagant when we remember that the practice of burning widows to death survived in India under English rule down to a time within living memory.<sup>2</sup>

The  
"great  
burnings"  
for Jewish  
kings.

At Jerusalem itself a reminiscence of the practice of burning kings, alive or dead, appears to have lingered as late as the time of Isaiah, who says: "For Tophet is prepared of old; yea, for the king it is made ready; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."<sup>3</sup> We know that "great burnings" were regularly made for dead kings of Judah,<sup>4</sup> and it can hardly be accidental that the place assigned by Isaiah to the king's

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 87 sq.

<sup>2</sup> In ancient Greece we seem to have a reminiscence of widow-burning in the legend that when the corpse of Capaneus was being consumed on the pyre, his wife Evadne threw herself into the flames and perished. See Euripides, *Supplices*, 980 sqq.; Appollodorus, iii. 7. 1; Zenobius, *Cent.* i. 30; Ovid, *Tristia*, v. 14. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah xxx. 33. The Revised Version has "a Topheth" instead of "Tophet." But Hebrew does not possess an indefinite article (the few passages of the Bible in which the Aramaic *an* is so used are no exception to the rule), and there is no evidence that Tophet (Topheth) was ever employed in a general sense. The passage of Isaiah has been rightly interpreted by W. Robertson Smith in the sense indicated in the text, though he denies that it contains any reference to the sacrifice of the children. See his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 372 sq. He observes

(p. 372, note 3): "Saul's body was burned (1 Sam. xxxi. 12), possibly to save it from the risk of exhumation by the Philistines, but perhaps rather with a religious intention, and almost as an act of worship, since his bones were buried under the sacred tamarisk at Jabesh." In 1 Chronicles x. 12 the tree under which the bones of Saul were buried is not a tamarisk but a terebinth or an oak.

<sup>4</sup> 2 Chronicles xvi. 14, xxi. 19; Jeremiah xxxiv. 5. There is no ground for assuming, as the Authorised Version does in Jeremiah xxxiv. 5, that only spices were burned on these occasions; indeed the burning of spices is not mentioned at all in any of the three passages. The "sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art," which were laid in the dead king's bed (2 Chronicles xvi. 14) were probably used to embalm him, not to be burned at his funeral. For though "great burnings" were regularly



pyre is the very spot in the Valley of Hinnom where the first-born children were actually burned by their parents in honour of Moloch "the King." The exact site of the Valley of Hinnom is disputed, but all are agreed in identifying it with one of the ravines which encircle or intersect Jerusalem; and according to some eminent authorities it was the one called by Josephus the Tyropoeon.<sup>1</sup> If this last identification is correct, the valley where the children were burned on a pyre lay immediately beneath the royal palace and the temple. Perhaps they died for God and the king.<sup>2</sup>

With the "great burnings" for dead Jewish kings it seems worth while to compare the great burnings still annually made for dead Jewish Rabbis at the lofty village of Meiron in Galilee, the most famous and venerated place of pilgrimage for Jews in modern Palestine. Here the tombs of the Rabbis are hewn out of the rock, and here on the thirtieth of April, the eve of May Day, multitudes of pilgrims, both men and women, assemble and burn their offerings, which consist of shawls, scarfs, handkerchiefs, books, and the like. These are placed in two stone basins on the top of two low pillars, and being drenched with oil and ignited they are consumed to ashes amid the loud applause, shouts, and cries of the spectators. A man has been known to pay as much as two thousand piastres for the privilege of being allowed to open the ceremony by burning a costly shawl. On such occasions the solemn unmoved serenity of the Turkish officials, who keep order, presents a striking contrast to the intense excitement of the Jews.<sup>3</sup> This curious ceremony may be explained by the widespread practice of burning

The great burnings for Jewish Rabbis at Meiron in Galilee.

made for the dead kings of Judah, there is no evidence (apart from the doubtful case of Saul) that their bodies were cremated. They are regularly said to have been buried, not burnt. The passage of Isaiah seems to show that what was burned at a royal funeral was a great, but empty, pyre. That the burnings for the kings formed part of a heathen custom was rightly perceived by Renan (*Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, iii. 121, note).

See *Encyclopædia Biblica*, i. v. "Jerusalem," vol. ii. 2423 sq.

<sup>2</sup> As to the Moloch worship, see Appendix I. at the end of the volume. I have to thank the Rev. Professor R. H. Kennett for indicating to me the inference which may be drawn from the identification of the Valley of Hinnom with the Tyropoeon.

<sup>3</sup> W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book, Central Palestine and Phœnicia*, pp. 575-579; Ed. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*,<sup>3</sup> ii. 430 sq.; Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria*,<sup>4</sup> p. 255.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* v. 4. 1.

property for the use and benefit of the dead. So, to take a single instance, the tyrant Periander collected the finest raiment of all the women in Corinth and burned it in a pit for his dead wife, who had sent him word by necromancy that she was cold and naked in the other world, because the clothes he buried with her had not been burnt.<sup>1</sup> In like manner, perhaps, garments and other valuables may have been consumed on the pyre for the use of the dead kings of Judah. In Siam, the corpse of a king or queen is burned in a huge structure resembling a permanent palace, which with its many-gabled and high-pitched roofs and multitudinous tinselled spires, soaring to a height of over two hundred feet, sometimes occupies an area of about an acre.<sup>2</sup> The blaze of such an enormous catafalque may resemble, even if it far surpasses, the "great burnings" for the Jewish kings.

### § 3. *Purification by Fire*

Death  
by fire  
regarded  
by the  
ancients as  
a kind of  
apotheosis.

These events and these traditions seem to prove that under certain circumstances Oriental monarchs deliberately chose to burn themselves to death. What were these circumstances? and what were the consequences of the act? If the intention had merely been to escape from the hands of a conqueror, an easier mode of death would naturally have been chosen. There must have been a special reason for electing to die by fire. The legendary death of Hercules, the historical death of Hamilcar, and the picture of Croesus enthroned in state on the pyre and pouring a libation, all combine to indicate that to be burnt alive was regarded as a solemn sacrifice, nay, more than that, as an apotheosis which raised the victim to the rank of a god.<sup>3</sup> For it is to be remembered that

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, v. 92. 7.

<sup>2</sup> C. Bock, *Temples and Elephants*, (London, 1884), pp. 73-76.

<sup>3</sup> This view was maintained long ago by Raoul-Rochette in regard to the deaths both of Sardanapalus and of Croesus. He supposed that "the Assyrian monarch, reduced to the last extremity, wished, by the mode of death which he chose, to give to his

sacrifice the form of an apotheosis and to identify himself with the national god of his country by allowing himself to be consumed, like him, on a pyre. . . . Thus mythology and history would be combined in a legend in which the god and the monarch would finally be confused. There is nothing in this which is not conformable to the ideas and habits of Asiatic civilisation."



Hamilcar as well as Hercules was worshipped after death. Fire, moreover, was regarded by the ancients as a purgative so powerful that properly applied it could burn away all that was mortal of a man, leaving only the divine and immortal spirit behind. Hence we read of goddesses who essayed to confer immortality on the infant sons of kings by burning them in the fire by night; but their beneficent purpose was always frustrated by the ignorant interposition of the mother or father, who peeping into the room saw the child in the flames and raised a cry of horror, thus disconcerting the goddess at her magic rites. This story is told of Isis in the house of the king of Byblus, of Demeter in the house of the king of Eleusis, and of Thetis in the house of her mortal husband Peleus.<sup>1</sup> In a slightly different way the witch Medea professed to give back to the old their lost youth by boiling them with a hell-broth in her magic cauldron;<sup>2</sup> and when Pelops had been butchered and served up at a banquet of the gods by his cruel father Tantalus, the divine beings, touched with pity, plunged his mangled remains in a kettle, from which after decoction he emerged alive and young.<sup>3</sup> "Fire," says Jamblichus, "destroys the

Fire was supposed to purge away the mortal parts of men, leaving the immortal.

See his memoir, "Sur l'Hercule Assyrien et Phénicien," *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xvii. Deuxième Partie (Paris, 1848), pp. 247 sq., 271 sqq. The notion of regeneration by fire was fully recognised by Raoul-Kochette (*op. cit.* pp. 30 sq.). It deserves to be noted that Croesus burned on a huge pyre the great and costly offerings which he dedicated to Apollo at Delphi. He thought, says Herodotus (i. 50), that in this way the god would get possession of the offerings.

σώματος. Apollodorus says (i. 5. 1), *ἐς πῦρ καταθεῖν τὸ σπέρμα καὶ περιφέρει τὰς θνητὰς σάρκας αὐτοῦ*, and again (iii. 13. 6), *ἐς τὸ πῦρ ἐγκαυθόσα τῇ νυκτὶ ἐφθειρεν ὃ ἦν αὐτῇ θνητὸν παρπύον*. Apollonius Rhodius says,

*ἥ μὲν γὰρ βροτέας αἰεὶ περὶ σάρκας ἔδαιεν  
νόκτα διὰ μέσσην φλογμὴν πυρός.*

And Ovid has,

*Inque foco pueri corpus vivente favilla  
Obstruit, humanum purget ut ignis onus.*

<sup>2</sup> She is said to have thus restored the youth of her husband Jason, her father-in-law Aeson, the nurses of Dionysus, and all their husbands (Euripides, *Medea*, Argum.; Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Knights*, 1321; compare Plautus, *Pseudolus*, 879 sqq.); and she applied the same process with success to an old ram (Apollodorus, i. 9. 27; Pausanias, viii. 11. 2; Hyginus, *Fab.* 24).

<sup>3</sup> Pindar, *Olymp.* i. 40 sqq., with the Scholiast; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 152.

<sup>1</sup> As to Isis see Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 16. As to Demeter see Homer, *Hymn to Demeter*, 231-262; Apollodorus, i. 5. 1; Ovid, *Fasts*, iv. 547-560. As to Thetis see Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 865-879; Apollodorus, iii. 13. 6. Most of these writers express clearly the thought that the fire consumed the mortal element, leaving the immortal. Thus Plutarch says, *πεκατέωρε τὰ θνητὰ τοῦ*

material part of sacrifices, it purifies all things that are brought near it, releasing them from the bonds of matter and, in virtue of the purity of its nature, making them meet for communion with the gods. So, too, it releases us from the bondage of corruption, it likens us to the gods, it makes us meet for their friendship, and it converts our material nature into an immaterial."<sup>1</sup> Thus we can understand why kings and commoners who claimed or aspired to divinity should choose death by fire. It opened to them the gates of heaven. The quack Peregrinus, who ended his disreputable career in the flames at Olympia, gave out that after death he would be turned into a spirit who would guard men from the perils of the night; and, as Lucian remarked, no doubt there were plenty of fools to believe him.<sup>2</sup> According to one account, the Sicilian philosopher Empedocles, who set up for being a god in his lifetime, leaped into the crater of Etna in order to establish his claim to godhead.<sup>3</sup> There is nothing incredible in the tradition. The crack-brained philosopher, with his itch for notoriety, may well have done what Indian fakirs<sup>4</sup> and the brazen-faced mountebank Peregrinus did in antiquity, and what Russian peasants and Chinese Buddhists have done in modern times.<sup>5</sup> There is no extremity to which fanaticism or vanity, or a mixture of the two, will not impel its victims.

#### § 4. *The Divinity of Lydian Kings*

The Lydian kings seem to have claimed divinity on the ground of their descent from Hercules.

But apart from any general notions of the purificatory virtues of fire, the kings of Lydia seem to have had a special reason for regarding death in the flames as their appropriate end. For the ancient dynasty of the Heraclids which preceded the house of Croesus on the throne traced their descent from a god or hero whom the Greeks called Hercules;<sup>6</sup> and this Lydian Hercules appears to have been identical in name and in substance with the Cilician

<sup>1</sup> Jamblichus, *De mysteriis*, v. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *De morte Peregrini*, 27 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Diogenes Laertius, viii. 2. 69 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *De morte Peregrini*, 25;

Strabo, xv. 1. 64 and 68, pp. 715, 717; Arrian, *Anabasis*, vii. 3.

<sup>5</sup> The evidence will be given in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, i. 7.



Hercules, whose effigy was regularly burned on a great pyre at Tarsus. The Lydian Hercules bore the name of Sandon;<sup>1</sup> the Cilician Hercules bore the name of Sandan, or perhaps rather of Sandon, since Sandon is known from inscriptions and other evidence to have been a Cilician name.<sup>2</sup> The characteristic emblems of the Cilician Hercules were the lion and the double-headed axe; and both these emblems meet us at Sardes in connection with the dynasty of the Heraclids. For the double-headed axe was carried as part of the sacred regalia by Lydian kings from the time of the legendary queen Omphale down to the reign of Candaules, the last of the Heraclid kings. It is said to have been given to Omphale by Hercules himself, and it was apparently regarded as a palladium of the Heraclid sovereignty; for after the dotard Candaules ceased to carry the axe himself, and had handed it over to the keeping of a courtier, a rebellion broke out, and the ancient dynasty of the Heraclids came to an end. The new king Gyges did not attempt to carry the old emblem of sovereignty; he dedicated it with other spoils to Zeus in Caria. Hence the image of the Carian Zeus bore an axe in his hand and received the epithet of Labrandeus, from *labrys*, the Lydian word for "axe."<sup>3</sup> Such is Plutarch's account; but we may suspect that Zeus, or rather the native god whom the Greeks identified with Zeus, carried the axe long before the time of Candaules. If, as is commonly supposed, the axe

<sup>1</sup> Joannes Lydus, *De magistratibus*, iii. 64.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 111, n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae*, 45. Zeus Labrandeus was worshipped at the village of Labrunda, situated in a pass over the mountains, near Mylasa in Caria. The temple was ancient. A road called the Sacred Way led downhill for ten miles to Mylasa, a city of white marble temples and colonnades which stood in a fertile plain at the foot of a precipitous mountain, where the marble was quarried. Processions bearing the sacred emblems went to and fro along the Sacred Way from Mylasa to Labrunda. See

Strabo, xiv. 2. 23, pp. 658 sq. The double-headed axe figures on the ruins and coins of Mylasa (Ch. Fellows, *Discoveries in Lycia*, p. 75; B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*, pp. 528 sq.). A horseman carrying a double-headed axe is a type which occurs on the coins of many towns in Lydia and Phrygia. At Thyatira this axe-bearing hero was called Tyrimnus, and games were held in his honour. He was identified with Apollo and the sun. See B. V. Head, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia* (London, 1901), p. cxxviii. On a coin of Miletus in Lydia the double-headed axe is represented between a bunch of grapes and ears of corn, as if it were an emblem of fertility (B. V. Head, *op. cit.* p. 162, pl. xvii. 11).

Lydian  
kings held  
responsible  
for the  
weather  
and the  
crops.

was the symbol of the Asiatic thunder-god,<sup>1</sup> it would be an appropriate emblem in the hand of kings, who are so often expected to make rain, thunder, and lightning for the good of their people. Whether the kings of Lydia were bound to make thunder and rain we do not know; but at all events, like many early monarchs, they seem to have been held responsible for the weather and the crops. In the reign of Meles the country suffered severely from dearth, so the people consulted an oracle, and the deity laid the blame on the kings, one of whom had in former years incurred the guilt of murder. The soothsayers accordingly declared that King Meles, though his own hands were clean, must be banished for three years in order that the taint of bloodshed should be purged away. The king obeyed and retired to Babylon, where he lived three years. In his absence the kingdom was administered by a deputy, a certain Sadyattes, son of Cadys, who traced his descent from Tylon.<sup>2</sup> As to this Tylon we shall hear more presently. Again, we read that the Lydians rejoiced greatly at the assassination of Spermus, another of their kings, "for he was very wicked, and the land suffered from drought in his reign."<sup>3</sup> Apparently, like the ancient Irish and many modern Africans, they laid the drought at the king's door, and thought that he only got what he deserved under the knife of the assassin.

The  
lion-god  
of Lydia.

With regard to the lion, the other emblem of the Cilician Hercules, we are told that the same king Meles, who was banished because of a dearth, sought to make the acropolis of Sardes impregnable by carrying round it a lion which a concubine had borne to him. Unfortunately at a single point, where the precipices were such that it seemed as if no human foot could scale them, he omitted to carry the beast, and sure enough at that very point the Persians afterwards clambered up into the citadel.<sup>4</sup> Now Meles was one of the old Heraclid dynasty<sup>5</sup> who boasted their descent from the lion-hero Hercules; hence the carrying of a lion

<sup>1</sup> L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, i.<sup>4</sup> 141 sq. As to the Hittite thunder-god and his axe see above, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolaus Damascenus, in *Fragmenta Historiarum Graecorum*, ed.

C. Müller, iii. 382 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 381.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, i. 84.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Chronica* i. 69, ed. A. Schoene.



round the acropolis was probably a form of consecration intended to place the stronghold under the guardianship of the lion-god, the hereditary deity of the royal family. And the story that the king's concubine gave birth to a lion's whelp suggests that the Lydian kings not only claimed kinship with the beast, but posed as lions in their own persons and passed off their sons as lion-cubs. Croesus dedicated at Delphi a lion of pure gold, perhaps as a badge of Lydia,<sup>1</sup> and Hercules with his lion's skin is a common type on coins of Sardes.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the death, or the attempted death, of Croesus on the pyre completes the analogy between the Cilician and the Lydian Hercules. At Tarsus and at Sardes we find the worship of a god whose symbols were the lion and the double-headed axe, and who was burned on a great pyre, either in effigy or in the person of a human representative. The Greeks called him Hercules, but his native name was Sandan or Sandon. At Sardes he seems to have been personated by the kings, who carried the double-axe and perhaps wore, like their ancestor Hercules, the lion's skin. We may conjecture that at Tarsus also the royal family aped the lion-god. At all events we know that Sandan, the name of the god, entered into the names of Cilician kings, and that in later times the priests of Sandan at Tarsus wore the royal purple.<sup>3</sup>

Identity  
of the  
Lydian and  
Cilician  
Hercules.

### § 5. *Hittite Gods at Tarsus and Sardes*

Now we have traced the religion of Tarsus back by a double thread to the Hittite religion of Cappadocia. One thread joins the Baal of Tarsus, with his grapes and his corn, to the god of Ibreez. The other thread unites the Sandan of Tarsus, with his lion and his double axe, to the similar figure at Boghaz-Keui. Without being unduly fanciful, therefore, we may surmise that the

The  
Cilician  
and Lydian  
Hercules  
(Sandan  
or Sandon)  
seems to  
have been  
a Hittite  
deity.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 50. At Thebes there was a stone lion which was said to have been dedicated by Hercules (Pausanias, ix. 17. 2).

<sup>2</sup> B. V. Head, *Historia Nummorum*, p. 553; *id.*, *Catalogue of the Greek*

*Coins of Lydia*, pp. xcvi, 239, 240, 241, 244, 247, 253, 254, 264, with plates xxiv. 9-11, 13, xxv. 2, 12, xxvii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 111.

Sandon-Hercules of Lydia was also a Hittite god, and that the Heraclid dynasty of Lydia were of Hittite blood. Certainly the influence, if not the rule, of the Hittites extended to Lydia; for at least two rock-carvings accompanied by Hittite inscriptions are still to be seen in the country. Both of them attracted the attention of the ancient Greeks. One of them represents a warrior in Hittite costume armed with a spear and bow. It is carved on the face of a grey rock, which stands out conspicuous on a bushy hillside, where an old road runs through a glen from the valley of the Hermus to the valley of the Cayster. The place is now called Karabeli. Herodotus thought that the figure represented the Egyptian king and conqueror Sesostris.<sup>1</sup> The other monument is a colossal seated figure of the Mother of the Gods, locally known in antiquity as Mother Plastene. It is hewn out of the solid rock and occupies a large niche in the face of a cliff at the steep northern foot of Mount Sipylus.<sup>2</sup> Thus it would seem that at some time or other the Hittites carried their arms to the shores of the Aegean. There is no improbability, therefore, in the view that a Hittite dynasty may have reigned at Sardes.<sup>3</sup>

### § 6. *The Resurrection of Tylon*

The burning of Sandan, like that of Melcarth,<sup>4</sup> was probably followed by a ceremony of his resurrection or awakening, to indicate that the divine life was not extinct, but had only assumed a fresher and purer form. Of that resurrection we have, so far as I am aware, no direct

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, i. 50; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, iv. 742-752; L. Messerschmidt, *Corpus Inscriptionum Hittiticarum*, pp. 33-37, with plates xxxvii., xxxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, iii. 24. 2, v. 13. 7 with my note; Perrot et Chipiez, *op. cit.* iv. 752-759; L. Messerschmidt, *op. cit.* pp. 37 *sq.*, pl. xxxix. 1. Unlike most Hittite sculptures the figure of Mother Plastene is carved almost in the round. The inscriptions which

accompany both these Lydian monuments are much defaced.

<sup>3</sup> The suggestion that the Heraclid kings of Lydia were Hittites, or under Hittite influence, is not novel. See W. Wright, *Empire of the Hittites*, p. 59; E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. 307, § 257; Ft. Hommel, *Grundriss der Geographie und Geschichte des alten Orients*, p. 54, n. 2; L. Messerschmidt, *The Hittites*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 84 *sqq.*



evidence. In default of it, however, there is a tale of a local Lydian hero called Tylon or Tylus, who was killed and brought to life again. The story runs thus. Tylon or Tylus was a son of Earth.<sup>1</sup> One day as he was walking on the banks of the Hermus a serpent stung and killed him. His distressed sister Moire had recourse to a giant named Damasen, who attacked and slew the serpent. But the serpent's mate culled a herb, "the flower of Zeus," in the woods, and bringing it in her mouth put it to the lips of the dead serpent, which immediately revived. In her turn Moire took the hint and restored her brother Tylon to life by touching him with the same plant.<sup>2</sup> A similar incident occurs in many folk-tales. Serpents are often credited with a knowledge of life-giving plants.<sup>3</sup> But Tylon seems to have been more than a mere hero of fairy-tales. He was closely associated with Sardes, for he figures on the coins of the city along with his champion Damasen or Masnes, the dead serpent, and the life-giving branch.<sup>4</sup> And he was related in various ways to the royal family of Lydia; for his daughter married Cotys, one of the earliest kings of the country,<sup>5</sup> and a descendant of his acted as regent during the banishment of King Meles.<sup>6</sup> It has been suggested that the story of his death and resurrection was acted as a pageant to symbolise the revival of plant life in spring.<sup>7</sup> At all events, a festival called the Feast of the Golden

Death and  
resurrec-  
tion of the  
Lydian  
hero Tylon.

<sup>1</sup> Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Roman.* i. 27. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Nonnus, *Dionysi.* xxv. 451-551; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxv. 14. The story, as we learn from Pliny, was told by Xanthus, an early historian of Lydia.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Glaucus, son of Minos, was restored to life by the seer Polyidus, who learned the trick from a serpent. See Apollodorus, iii. 3. 1. For references to other tales of the same sort see my note on Pausanias, ii. 10, 3 (vol. iii. pp. 65 sq.). The serpent's acquaintance with the tree of life in the garden of Eden probably belongs to the same cycle of stories.

<sup>4</sup> B. V. Head, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia*, pp. cxi-cxiii, with pl. xxvii. 12. On the coins the

champion's name appears as Masnes or Masanes, but the reading is doubtful. The name Masnes occurred in Xanthus's history of Lydia (*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iv. 629). It is probably the same with Manes, the name of a son of Zeus and Earth, who is said to have been the first king of Lydia (Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Ant. Rom.* i. 27. 1). Manes was the father of King Atys (Herodotus, i. 94). Thus Tylon was connected with the royal family of Lydia through his champion as well as in the ways mentioned in the text.

<sup>5</sup> Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *l.c.*

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 150.

<sup>7</sup> B. V. Head, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia*, p. cxiii.

Feast of  
the Golden  
Flower at  
Sardes.

Flower was celebrated in honour of Proserpine at Sardes,<sup>1</sup> probably in one of the vernal months, and the revival of the hero and of the goddess may well have been represented together. The Golden Flower of the festival would then be the "flower of Zeus" of the legend, perhaps the yellow crocus of nature or rather her more gorgeous sister, the Oriental saffron. For saffron grew in great abundance at the Corycian cave of Zeus;<sup>2</sup> and it is an elegant conjecture, if it is nothing more, that the very name of the place meant "the Crocus Cave."<sup>3</sup> However, on the coins of Sardes the magical plant seems to be a branch rather than a blossom, a Golden Bough rather than a Golden Flower.

<sup>1</sup> B. V. Head, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia*, pp. cx, cxiii. The festival seems to be mentioned only on coins.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> V. Hehn, *Kulturpflanzen und Haustierte*,<sup>2</sup> p. 261. He would derive the name from the Semitic, or at all events the Cilician, language. The Hebrew word for saffron is *karkôm*. As to the spring flowers of North-western Asia Minor, Leake remarks (April 1, 1800) that "primroses, violets, and crocuses, are the only flowers to be seen" (*Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor*, p. 143). Near Mylasa in Caria, Fellows saw (March 20, 1840) the broom covered with yellow

blossoms and a great variety of anemones, like "a rich Turkey carpet, in which the green grass did not form a prominent colour amidst the crimson, lilac, blue, scarlet, white, and yellow flowers" (Ch. Fellows, *Discoveries in Lycia*, pp. 65, 66). In February the yellow stars of *Gagea arvensis* cover the rocky and grassy grounds of Lycia, and the field-marigold often meets the eye. At the same season in Lycia the shrub *Colutea arborescens* opens its yellow flowers. See T. A. B. Spratt and E. Forbes, *Travels in Lycia* (London, 1847), ii. 133. I must leave it to others to identify the Golden Flower of Sardes.



## CHAPTER VIII

### VOLCANIC RELIGION

#### § 1. *The Burning of a God*

THUS it appears that a custom of burning a god in effigy or in the person of a human representative was practised by at least two peoples of Western Asia, the Phoenicians and the Hittites. Whether they both developed the custom independently, or whether one of them adopted it from the other, we cannot say. And their reasons for celebrating a rite which to us seems strange and monstrous are also obscure. In the preceding inquiry some grounds have been adduced for thinking that the practice was based on a conception of the purifying virtue of fire, which, by destroying the corruptible and perishable elements of man, was supposed to fit him for union with the imperishable and the divine. Now to people who created their gods in their own likeness, and imagined them subject to the same law of decadence and death, the idea would naturally occur that fire might do for the gods what it was believed to do for men, that it could purge them of the taint of corruption and decay, could sift the mortal from the immortal in their composition, and so endow them with eternal youth. Hence a custom might arise of subjecting the deities themselves, or the more important of them, to an ordeal of fire for the purpose of refreshing and renovating those creative energies on the maintenance of which so much depended. To the coarse apprehension of the uninstructed and unsympathetic observer the solemn rite might easily wear a very different aspect. According as he was of a pious or of a sceptical turn of mind, he might

The custom of burning a god may have been intended to recruit his divine energies.

denounce it as a sacrilege or deride it as an absurdity. "To burn the god whom you worship," he might say, "is the height of impiety and of folly. If you succeed in the attempt, you kill him and deprive yourselves of his valuable services. If you fail, you have mortally offended him, and sooner or later he will visit you with his severe displeasure." To this the worshipper, if he was patient and polite, might listen with a smile of indulgent pity for the ignorance and obtuseness of the critic. "You are much mistaken," he might observe, "in imagining that we expect or attempt to kill the god whom we adore. The idea of such a thing is as repugnant to us as to you. Our intention is precisely the opposite of that which you attribute to us. Far from wishing to destroy the deity, we desire to make him live for ever, to place him beyond the reach of that process of degeneration and final dissolution to which all things here below appear by their nature to be subject. He does not die in the fire. Oh no! Only the corruptible and mortal part of him perishes in the flames: all that is incorruptible and immortal of him will survive the purer and stronger for being freed from the contagion of baser elements. That little heap of ashes which you see there is not our god. It is only the skin which he has sloughed, the husk which he has cast. He himself is far away, in the clouds of heaven, in the depths of earth, in the running waters, in the tree and the flower, in the corn and the vine. We do not see him face to face, but every year he manifests his divine life afresh in the blossoms of spring and the fruits of autumn. We eat of his broken body in bread. We drink of his shed blood in the juice of the grape."

## § 2. *The Volcanic Region of Cappadocia*

The custom of burning a god may have stood in some relation to volcanic phenomena.

Some such train of reasoning may suffice to explain, though naturally not to justify, the custom which we bluntly call the burning of a god. Yet it is worth while to ask whether in the development of the practice these general considerations may not have been reinforced or modified by special circumstances; for example, by the natural features of the country where the custom grew up. For the history



of religion, like that of all other human institutions, has been profoundly affected by local conditions, and cannot be fully understood apart from them. Now Asia Minor, the region where the practice in question appears to have been widely diffused, has from time immemorial been subjected to the action of volcanic forces on a great scale. It is true that, so far as the memory of man goes back, the craters of its volcanoes have been extinct, but the vestiges of their dead or slumbering fires are to be seen in many places, and the country has been shaken and rent at intervals by tremendous earthquakes. These phenomena cannot fail to have impressed the imagination of the inhabitants, and thereby to have left some mark on their religion.

Among the extinct volcanoes of Anatolia the greatest is Mount Argæus, in the centre of Cappadocia, the heart of the old Hittite country. It is indeed the highest point of Asia Minor, and one of the loftiest mountains known to the ancients; for in height it falls not very far short of Mount Blanc. Towering abruptly in a huge pyramid from the plain, it is a conspicuous object for miles on miles. Its top is white with eternal snow, and in antiquity its lower slopes were clothed with dense forests, from which the inhabitants of the treeless Cappadocian plains drew their supply of timber. In these woods, and in the low grounds at the foot of the mountain, the languishing fires of the volcano manifested themselves as late as the beginning of our era. The ground was treacherous. Under a grassy surface there lurked pits of fire, into which stray cattle and unwary travellers often fell. Experienced woodmen used great caution when they went to fell trees in the forest. Elsewhere the soil was marshy, and flames were seen to play over it at night.<sup>1</sup> Superstitious fancies no doubt gathered thick around these perilous spots, but what shape they took we cannot say. Nor do we know whether

The great  
extinct  
volcano  
Mount  
Argæus in  
Cappa-  
docia.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xii. 2. 7, p. 538. Mount Argæus still retains its ancient name in slightly altered forms (*Arifçeh*, *Erfifçeh*, *Erfjäut*). Its height is about 13,000 feet. In the nineteenth century it was ascended by at least two English travellers, W. J. Hamilton and

H. F. Tozer. See W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, ii. 269-281; H. F. Tozer, *Turkish Armenia and Eastern Asia Minor*, pp. 94, 113-131; É. Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, ix. 476-478.

sacrifices were offered on the top of the mountain, though a curious discovery may perhaps be thought to indicate that they were. Sharp and lofty pinnacles of red porphyry, inaccessible to the climber, rise in imposing grandeur from the eternal snow of the summit, and here Mr. Tozer found that the rock had been perforated in various places with human habitations. One such rock-hewn dwelling winds inward for a considerable distance; rude niches are hollowed in its sides, and on its roof and walls may be seen the marks of tools.<sup>1</sup> The ancients certainly did not climb mountains for pleasure or health, and it is difficult to imagine that any motive but superstition should have led them to provide dwellings in such a place. These rock-cut chambers may have been shelters for priests charged with the performance of religious or magical rites on the summit.

### § 3. *Fire-Worship in Cappadocia*

Persian  
fire-  
worship  
in Cappa-  
docia.

Under the Persian rule Cappadocia became, and long continued to be, a great seat of the Zoroastrian fire-worship. In the time of Strabo, about the beginning of our era, the votaries of that faith and their temples were still numerous in the country. The perpetual fire burned on an altar, surrounded by a heap of ashes, in the middle of the temple; and the priests daily chanted their liturgy before it, holding in their hands a bundle of myrtle rods and wearing on their heads tall felt caps with cheek-pieces which covered their lips, lest they should defile the sacred flame with their breath.<sup>2</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that the natural fires which burned perpetually on the outskirts of Mount Argæus attracted the devotion of the disciples of Zoroaster, for elsewhere similar fires have been the object of religious reverence down to modern times. Thus at Jualamukhi, on the lower slopes of the Himalayas, jets of combustible gas issue from the earth; and a great Hindoo temple, the resort of many pilgrims, is built over them. The perpetual

Worship of  
natural  
fires which  
burn per-  
petually.

<sup>1</sup> H. F. Tozer, *op. cit.* pp. 125-127.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xv. 3. 14 sq., pp. 732 sq.  
A bundle of twigs, called the Barsom  
(*Berema* in the Avesta), is still used

by the Parsee priests in chanting their  
liturgy. See M. Haug, *Essays on  
the Sacred Language, Writings, and  
Religion of the Parsis*<sup>3</sup> (London, 1884),  
pp. 4, n. 1, 283.



flame, which is of a reddish hue and emits an aromatic perfume, rises from a pit in the fore-court of the sanctuary. The worshippers deliver their gifts, consisting usually of flowers, to the attendant fakirs, who first hold them over the flame and then cast them into the body of the temple.<sup>1</sup> Again, Hindoo pilgrims make their way with great difficulty to Baku on the Caspian, in order to worship the everlasting fires which there issue from the beds of petroleum. The sacred spot is about ten miles to the north-east of the city. An English traveller, who visited Baku in the middle of the eighteenth century, has thus described the place and the worship. "There are several antient temples built with stone, supposed to have been all dedicated to fire; most of them are arched vaults, not above ten to fifteen feet high. Amongst others there is a little temple, in which the Indians now worship; near the altar, about three feet high, is a large hollow cane, from the end of which issues a blue flame, in colour and gentleness not unlike a lamp that burns with spirits, but seemingly more pure. These Indians affirm that this flame has continued ever since the flood, and they believe it will last to the end of the world; that if it was resisted or suppressed in that place, it would rise in some other. Here are generally forty or fifty of these poor devotees, who come on a pilgrimage from their own country, and subsist upon wild sallary, and a kind of Jerusalem artichokes, which are very good food, with other herbs and roots, found a little to the northward. Their business is to make expiation, not for their own sins only, but for those of others; and they continue the longer time, in proportion to the number of persons for whom they have engaged to pray. They mark their foreheads with saffron, and have a great veneration for a red cow."<sup>2</sup> Thus it would seem that a purifying virtue is attributed to the sacred flame, since pilgrims come to it from far to expiate sin.

<sup>1</sup> Baron Charles Hügel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Panjab* (London, 1845), pp. 42-46; W. Crooke, *Things Indian* (London, 1906), p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Jonas Hanway, *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea: with the Author's Journal of Travels*, Second Edition (London,

1754), i. 263. For later descriptions of the fires and fire-worshippers of Baku, see J. Reinegg, *Beschreibung des Kaukasus* (Gotha and St. Petersburg, 1796), i. 151-159; A. von Haxthausen, *Transkaukasien* (Leipzig, 1856), ii. 80-85. Compare W. Crooke, *Things Indian*, p. 219.

§ 4. *The Burnt Land of Lydia*

The Burnt  
Land of  
Lydia.

Another volcanic region of Asia Minor is the district of Lydia, to which, on account of its remarkable appearance, the Greeks gave the name of the Burnt Land. It lies to the east of Sardes in the upper valley of the Hermus, and covers an area of about fifty miles by forty. As described by Strabo, the country was wholly treeless except for the vines, which produced a wine inferior to none of the most famous vintages of antiquity. The surface of the plains was like ashes; the hills were composed of black stone, as if they had been scorched by fire. Some people laid the scene of Typhon's battle with the gods in this Black Country, and supposed that it had been burnt by the thunderbolts hurled from heaven at the impious monster. The philosophic Strabo, however, held that the fires which had wrought this havoc were subterranean, not celestial, and he pointed to three craters, at intervals of about four miles, each in a hill of scoriae which he supposed to have been once molten matter ejected by the volcanoes.<sup>1</sup> His observation and his theory have both been confirmed by modern science. The three extinct volcanoes to which he referred are still conspicuous features of the landscape. Each is a black cone of loose cinders, scoriae, and ashes, with steep sides and a deep crater. From each a flood of rugged black lava has flowed forth, bursting out at the foot of the cone, and then rushing down the dale to the bed of the Hermus. The dark streams follow all the sinuosities of the valleys, their sombre hue contrasting with the rich verdure of the surrounding landscape. Their surface, broken into a thousand fantastic forms, resembles a sea lashed into fury by a gale, and then suddenly hardened into stone. Regarded from the geological point of view, these black cones of cinders and these black rivers of lava are of comparatively recent formation. Exposure to the weather for thousands of years has not yet softened their asperities and decomposed them into vegetable mould; they are as

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xii. 8. 18 sq., p. 579; district is mentioned by Vitruvius (viii. xiii. 4. 11, p. 628. The wine of the 3. 12) and Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xiv. 75).



hard and ungenial as if the volcanic stream had ceased to flow but yesterday. But in the same district there are upwards of thirty other volcanic cones, whose greater age is proved by their softened forms, their smoother sides, and their mantle of vegetation. Some of them are planted with vineyards to their summits.<sup>1</sup> Thus the volcanic soil is still as favourable to the cultivation of the vine as it was in antiquity. The relation between the two was noted by the ancients. Strabo compares the vines of the Burnt Land with the vineyards of Catania fertilised by the ashes of Mount Etna; and he tells us that some ingenious persons explained the fire-born Dionysus as a myth of the grapes fostered by volcanic agency.<sup>2</sup>

### § 5. *The Earthquake God*

But the inhabitants of these regions were reminded of the slumbering fires by other and less agreeable tokens than the generous juice of their grapes. For not the Burnt Land only but the country to the south, including the whole valley of the Maeander, was subject to frequent and violent shocks of earthquake. The soil was loose, friable, and full of salts, the ground hollow, undermined by fire and water. In particular the city of Philadelphia was a great centre of disturbance. The shocks there, we are told, were continuous. The houses rocked, the walls cracked and gaped; the few inhabitants were kept busy repairing the breaches or buttressing and propping the edifices which threatened to tumble about their ears. Most of the citizens, indeed, had the prudence to dwell dispersed on their farms. It was a marvel, says Strabo, that such a city should have any inhabitants at all, and a still greater marvel that it should ever have been built.<sup>3</sup> However, by a wise dispensation of Providence, the

Earth-  
quakes  
in Asia  
Minor.

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Hamilton, *Researches in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, i. 136-140, ii. 131-138. One of the three recent cones described by Strabo is now called the *Kara Devlit*, or Black Inkstand. Its top is about 2500 feet above the sea, but only 500 feet above the surrounding plain. The adjoining town of Koula, built of the black lava on which it stands, has a

sombre and dismal look. Another of the cones, almost equally high, has a crater of about half a mile in circumference and three or four hundred feet deep.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xiii. 4. 11, p. 628. Compare his account of the Catanian vineyards (vi. 2. 3, p. 269).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* xii. 8. 16-18, pp. 578 sq.; xiii. 4. 10 sq., p. 628.

Worship of  
Poseidon,  
the earth-  
quake god.

earthquakes which shook the foundations of their houses only strengthened those of their faith. The people of Apameia, whose town was repeatedly devastated, paid their devotions with great fervour to Poseidon, the earthquake god.<sup>1</sup> Again, the island of Santorin, in the Greek Archipelago, has been for thousands of years a great theatre of volcanic activity. On one occasion the waters of the bay boiled and flamed for four days, and an island composed of red-hot matter rose gradually, as if hoisted by machinery, above the waves. It happened that the sovereignty of the seas was then with the Rhodians, those merchant-princes whose prudent policy, strict but benevolent oligarchy, and beautiful island-city, rich with accumulated treasures of native art, rendered them in a sense the Venetians of the ancient world. So when the ebullition and heat of the eruption had subsided, their sea-captains landed in the new island, and founded a sanctuary of Poseidon the Establisher or Securer,<sup>2</sup> a complimentary epithet often bestowed on him as a hint not to shake the earth more than he could conveniently help.<sup>3</sup> In many places people sacrificed to Poseidon the Establisher, in the hope that he would be as good as his name and not bring down their houses on their heads.<sup>4</sup>

Spartan  
propitia-  
tion of  
Poseidon  
during an  
earth-  
quake.

Another instance of a Greek attempt to quiet the perturbed spirit underground is instructive, because similar efforts are still made by savages in similar circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xii. 8. 18, p. 579. Compare Tacitus, *Annals*, xii. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, i. 3. 16, p. 57. Compare Plutarch, *De Pythiæ oraculis*, 11; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 202; Justin, xxx. 4. The event seems to have happened in 197 B.C. Several other islands are known to have appeared in the same bay both in ancient and modern times. So far as antiquity is concerned, the dates of their appearance are given by Pliny, but some confusion on the subject has crept into his mind, or rather, perhaps, into his text. See the discussion of the subject in W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, ii. 1158-1160. As to the eruptions in the bay of Santorin, the last of which occurred in 1866 and produced a new island, see Sir Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>22</sup> i. 51,

ii. 65 sqq.; C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 272 sqq. There is a monograph on Santorin and its eruptions (F. Fouqué, *Santorin et ses éruptions*, Paris, 1879). Strabo has given a brief but striking account of Rhodes, its architecture, its art-treasures, and its constitution (xiv. 2. 5, pp. 652 sq.). As to the Rhodian schools of art see H. Brunn, *Geschichte der griechischen Künstler*, i. 459 sqq., ii. 233 sqq., 286 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 682; Pausanias, iii. 11. 9, vii. 21. 7; Plutarch, *Thesur.* 36; Aristides, *Isthmic.* vol. i. p. 29, ed. G. Dindorf; Appian, *Bell. Civ.* v. 98; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 17. 22; Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Græcarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 543.

<sup>4</sup> Cornutus, *De natura deorum*, 22.



Once when a Spartan army under King Agesipolis had taken the field, it chanced that the ground under their feet was shaken by an earthquake. It was evening, and the king was at mess with the officers of his staff. No sooner did they feel the shock than, with great presence of mind, they rose from their dinner and struck up a popular hymn in honour of Poseidon. The soldiers outside the tent took up the strain, and soon the whole army joined in the sacred melody.<sup>1</sup> It is not said whether the flute band, which always played the Spartan redcoats into action,<sup>2</sup> accompanied the deep voices of the men with its shrill music. At all events, the intention of this service of praise, addressed to the earth-shaking god, can only have been to prevail on him to stop. I have spoken of the Spartan redcoats because the uniform of Spartan soldiers was red.<sup>3</sup> As they fought in an extended, not a deep, formation, a Spartan line of battle must always have been, what the British used to be, a thin red line. It was in this order, and no doubt with the music playing and the sun flashing on their arms, that they advanced to meet the Persians at Thermopylae. Like Cromwell's Ironsides, these men could fight as well as sing psalms.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, iv. 7. 4. As to the Spartan headquarters staff (*ol repl daporlav*), see *id.* iv. 5. 8, vi. 4. 14; Xenophon, *Respublica Lacedaem.* xiii. 1, xv. 4. Usually the Spartans desisted from any enterprise they had in hand when an earthquake happened (Thucydides, iii. 59. 1, v. 50. 5, vi. 95. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Thucydides, v. 70. 1. The use of the music, Thucydides tells us, was not to inspire the men, but to enable them to keep step, and so to march in close order. Without music a long line of battle was apt to straggle in advancing to the charge. As missiles were little used in Greek warfare, there was no need to hurry the advance over the intervening ground; accordingly it was made deliberately and with the bands playing. The air to which the Spartans charged was called Castor's tune. It was the king in person who gave the word for the flutes to strike up. See Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 22.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Respublica Lacedaem.*

xi. 3; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, 1140; Aristotle, cited by a scholiast on Aristophanes, *Acharn.* 320; Plutarch, *Instituta Laconica*, 24. When a great earthquake had destroyed the city of Sparta and the Messenians were in revolt, the Spartans sent a messenger to Athens asking for help. Aristophanes (*Lysistrata*, 1138 *sqq.*) describes the man as if he had seen him, sitting as a suppliant on the altar with his pale face and his red coat.

<sup>4</sup> I have assumed that the sun shone on the Spartans at Thermopylae. For the battle was fought in the height of summer, when the Greek sky is generally cloudless, and on that particular morning the weather was very still. The evening before, the Persians had sent round a body of troops by a difficult pass to take the Spartans in the rear; day was breaking when they neared the summit, and the first intimation of their approach which reached the ears of the Phocian guards posted on the mountain was the loud crackling

East  
Indian  
modes of  
stopping  
an earth-  
quake by  
informing  
the god or  
giant that  
there are  
still men on  
the earth.

If the Spartans imagined that they could stop an earthquake by a soldiers' chorus, their theory and practice resembled those of many other barbarians. Thus the people of Timor, in the East Indies, think that the earth rests on the shoulder of a mighty giant, and that when he is weary of bearing it on one shoulder he shifts it to the other, and so causes the ground to quake. At such times, accordingly, they all shout at the top of their voices to let him know that there are still people on the earth; for otherwise they fear lest, impatient of his burden, he might tip it into the sea.<sup>1</sup> The Manichaeans held a precisely similar theory of earthquakes, except that according to them the weary giant transferred his burden from one shoulder to the other at the end of every thirty years,<sup>2</sup> a view which, at all events, points to the observation of a cycle in the recurrence of earthquake shocks. But we are not told that these heretics reduced an absurd theory to an absurd practice by raising a shout in order to remind the earth-shaker of the inconvenience he was putting them to. However, both the theory and the practice are to be found in full force in various parts of the East Indies. When the Balinese and the Sundanese feel an earthquake they cry out, "Still alive," or "We still live," to acquaint the earth-shaking god or giant with their existence.<sup>3</sup> The Bataks of Sumatra in the like circum-

of leaves under their feet in the oak forest. Moreover, the famous Spartan saying about fighting in the shade of the Persian arrows, which obscured the sun, points to bright, hot weather. It was at high noon, and therefore probably in the full blaze of the mid-day sun, that the last march-out took place. See Herodotus, vii. 215-226; and as to the date of the battle (about the time of the Olympic games) see Herodotus, vii. 206, viii. 12 and 26; G. Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte*, ii.<sup>2</sup> 673, n. 9.

<sup>1</sup> S. Müller, *Reizen en Onderzoekingen in den Indischen Archipel* (Amsterdam, 1857), ii. 264 sq. Compare A. Bastian, *Indonesien*, ii. 3. The beliefs and customs of the East Indian peoples in regard to earthquakes have been described by G. A. Wilken, *Het animisme bij de volken van den Indischen Archipel*, Tweede

Stuk (Leiden, 1885), pp. 247-254. Professor E. B. Tylor was so good as to lend me his copy of this second part of Wilken's valuable dissertation on animism. See also G. A. Wilken, *Handleiding voor de vergelijkende Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, pp. 604 sq.; and on primitive conceptions of earthquakes in general, E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>3</sup> i. 364-366; R. Lasch, "Die Ursache und Bedeutung der Erdbeben im Volksglauben und Volksbrauch," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, v. (1902) pp. 236-257, 369-383.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, *Adversus Haereses*, ii. 2. 23 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, xlii. 68).

<sup>3</sup> H. N. van der Tuuk, "Notes on the Kawi Language and Literature," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.S. xiii. (1881) p. 50.



stances shout "The handle! The handle!" The meaning of the cry is variously explained. Some say that it contains a delicate allusion to the sword which is thrust up to the hilt into the body of the demon or serpent who shakes the earth. Thus explained the words are a jeer or taunt levelled at that mischievous being.<sup>1</sup> Others say that when Batara-guru, the creator, was about to fashion the earth he began by building a raft, which he commanded a certain Naga-padoha to support. While he was hard at work his chisel broke, and at the same moment Naga-padoha budged under his burden. Therefore Batara-guru said, "Hold hard a moment! The handle of the chisel is broken off." And that is why the Bataks call out "The handle of the chisel" during an earthquake. They believe that the deluded Naga-padoha will take the words for the voice of the creator, and that he will hold hard accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

When the earth quakes in some parts of Celebes, it is said that all the inhabitants of a village will rush out of their houses and grub up grass by handfuls in order to attract the attention of the earth-spirit, who, feeling his hair thus torn out by the roots, will be painfully conscious that there are still people above ground.<sup>3</sup> So in Samoa, during shocks of earthquake, the natives sometimes ran and threw themselves on the ground, gnawed the earth, and shouted frantically to the earthquake god Mafuie to desist lest he should shake the earth to pieces.<sup>4</sup> They consoled themselves with the thought that Mafuie has only one arm, saying, "If he had two, what a shake he would give!"<sup>5</sup> The Bagobos of the Philippine Islands believe that the earth rests on a great post, which a large serpent is trying to remove. When the serpent shakes the post, the earth

Various modes of prevailing upon the earthquake god to stop.

<sup>1</sup> W. Ködding, "Die batakischen Götter und ihr Verhältniss zum Brahmanismus," *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift*, xii. (1885) p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> G. A. Wilken, *op. cit.* p. 252; H. N. van der Tuuk, *op. cit.* pp. 49 sq. For more evidence of similar practices in the East Indies see J. G. F. Riedel, *De sluik en kroechharige rassen tusschen Celebes en Papua*, pp. 330, 398, 428.

<sup>3</sup> J. G. F. Riedel, "De Topan-

tunuasu of oorspronkelijke Volkstammen van Central Celebes," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkskunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, xxxv. (1886) p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> J. Williams, *Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, p. 379.

<sup>5</sup> G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 211; Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, ii. 131.

quakes. At such times the Bagobos beat their dogs to make them howl, for the howling of the animals frightens the serpent, and he stops shaking the post. Hence so long as an earthquake lasts the howls of dogs may be heard to proceed from every house in a Bagobo village.<sup>1</sup> The Tongans think that the earth is supported on the prostrate form of the god Móooi. When he is tired of lying in one posture, he tries to turn himself about, and that causes an earthquake. Then the people shout and beat the ground with sticks to make him lie still.<sup>2</sup> During an earthquake the Burmese make a great uproar, beating the walls of their houses and shouting, to frighten away the evil genius who is shaking the earth.<sup>3</sup> On a like occasion and for a like purpose some natives of New Britain beat drums and blow on shells.<sup>4</sup> The Dorasques, an Indian tribe of Panama, believed that the volcano of Chiriqui was inhabited by a powerful spirit, who, in his anger, caused an earthquake. At such times the Indians shot volleys of arrows in the direction of the volcano to terrify him and make him desist.<sup>5</sup> Earthquakes are common in the Pampa del Sacramento of Eastern Peru. The Conibos, a tribe of Indians on the left bank of the great Ucayali River, attribute these disturbances to the Creator, who usually resides in heaven, but comes down from time to time to see whether the work of his hands still exists. The result of his descent is an earthquake. So when one happens, these Indians rush out of their huts with extravagant gestures shouting, as if in answer to a question, "A moment, a moment, here I am, father, here I am." Their intention is, no doubt, to assure their heavenly father that they are still alive, and that he may return to his mansion on high with an easy mind. They never remember the Creator nor pay him any heed except at an earthquake.<sup>6</sup> Some of the Peruvian Indians

<sup>1</sup> A. Schadenburg, "Die Bewohner von Süd-Mindanao und der Insel Samal," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xlvii. (1885) p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> W. Mariner, "Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands," li. 112 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Sangermano, *Description of the*

*Burmese Empire* (Rangoon, 1885), p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, x. (1907) pp. 308 sq.

<sup>5</sup> A. Pinart, "Les Indiens de l'état de Panama," *Revue d'Ethnographie*, vi. (1887) p. 119.

<sup>6</sup> De St. Cricq, "Voyage du Pérou au Brésil par les fleuves Ucayali et



regarded an earthquake as a sign that the gods were thirsty, so they poured water on the ground.<sup>1</sup> In Africa the Atonga tribe of Lake Nyasa used to believe that an earthquake was the voice of God calling to enquire whether his people were all there. So when the rumble was heard underground they all shouted in answer, "Ye, ye," and some of them went to the mortars used for pounding corn and beat on them with the pestles. They thought that if any one did not thus answer he would soon die.<sup>2</sup>

An English resident in Fiji attributed a sudden access of piety in Kantavu, one of the islands, to a tremendous earthquake which destroyed many of the natives. The Fijians think that their islands rest on a god, who causes earthquakes by turning over in his sleep. So they sacrifice to him things of great value in order that he may turn as gently as possible.<sup>3</sup> In Nias a violent earthquake has a salutary effect on the morals of the natives. They suppose that it is brought about by a certain Batoo Bedano, who intends to destroy the earth because of the iniquity of mankind. So they assemble and fashion a great image out of the trunk of a tree. They make offerings, they confess their sins, they correct the fraudulent weights and measures, they vow to do better in the future, they implore mercy, and if the earth has gaped, they throw a little gold into the fissure. But when the danger is over, all their fine vows and promises are soon forgotten.<sup>4</sup>

Religious  
and moral  
effects of  
earth-  
quakes.

Amazon, Indiens Conihos," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), IVème Série, vi. (1853) p. 292.

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 469.

<sup>2</sup> A. Werner, *The Natives of British Central Africa* (London, 1906), p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> J. Jackson, in J. E. Erskine's *Journal of a Cruise among the Islands of the Western Pacific*, p. 473. My friend, Mr. Lorimer Fison writes to me (December 15, 1906) that the name of the Fijian earthquake god is Maui, not A Dage, as Jackson says. Mr. Fison adds, "I have seen Fijians stamping and smiting the ground and yelling at the top of their voices in order to rouse him."

<sup>4</sup> J. T. Nieuwenhuisen en H. C. B. von Rosenberg, "Verslag omtrent het eiland Nias," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxx. (Batavia, 1863) p. 118. In Soerakarta, a district of Java, when an earthquake takes place the people lie flat on their stomachs on the ground, and lick it with their tongues so long as the earthquake lasts. This they do in order that they may not lose their teeth prematurely. See J. W. Winter, "Beknopte Beschrijving van het hof Soerakarta in 1824," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, liv. (1902) p. 85. The connection of ideas in this custom is not clear.

The god of the sea and of the earthquake naturally conceived as one.

We may surmise that in those Greek lands which have suffered severely from earthquakes, such as Achaia and the western coasts of Asia Minor, Poseidon was worshipped not less as an earthquake god than as a sea-god.<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered that an earthquake is often accompanied by a tremendous wave which comes rolling in like a mountain from the sea, swamping the country far and wide; indeed on the coasts of Chili and Peru, which have often been devastated by both, the wave is said to be even more dreaded than the earthquake.<sup>2</sup> The Greeks often experienced this combination of catastrophes, this conspiracy, as it were, of earth and sea against the life and works of man.<sup>3</sup> It was thus that Helice, on the coast of Achaia, perished with all its inhabitants on a winter night, overwhelmed by the billows; and its destruction was set down to the wrath of Poseidon.<sup>4</sup> Nothing could be more natural than that to people familiar with the twofold calamity the dreadful god of the earthquake and of the sea should appear to be one and the same. The historian Diodorus Siculus observes that Peloponnese was deemed to have been in ancient days the abode of Poseidon, that the whole country was in a manner sacred to him, and that every city in it worshipped him above all the gods. This devotion to Poseidon he explains partly by the earthquakes and floods by which the land has been visited, partly by the remarkable chasms and subterranean rivers which are a conspicuous feature of its limestone mountains.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this question see C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 332-336. As to the frequency of earthquakes in Achaia and Asia Minor see Seneca, *Epist.* xiv. 3. 9; and as to Achaia in particular see C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *op. cit.* pp. 324-326. On the coast of Achaia there was a chain of sanctuaries of Poseidon (L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, i.<sup>3</sup> 575).

<sup>2</sup> See Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> ii. 147 sqq.; J. Milne, *Earthquakes* (London, 1886), pp. 165 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Thucydides, iii. 89.

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, viii. 7. 1 sq., pp. 384 sq.;

Diodorus Siculus, xv. 49; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xi. 19; Pausanias, vii. 24. 5 sq. and 12, vii. 25. 1 and 4.

<sup>5</sup> Diodorus Siculus, xv. 49. 4 sq. Among the most famous seats of the worship of Poseidon in Peloponnese were Taenarum in Laconia, Helice in Achaia, Mantinea in Arcadia, and the island of Calauria, off the coast of Troezen. See Pausanias, ii. 33. 2, iii. 25. 4-8, vii. 24. 5 sq., viii. 10. 2-4. Laconia as well as Achaia has suffered much from earthquakes, and it contained many sanctuaries of Poseidon. We may suppose that the deity was worshipped here chiefly as the earthquake god, since the rugged coasts of Laconia are ill adapted to maritime



§ 6. *Worship of Mephitic Vapours*

But eruptions and earthquakes, though the most tremendous, are not the only phenomena of volcanic regions which have affected the religion of the inhabitants. Poisonous mephitic vapours and hot springs, which abound especially in volcanic regions,<sup>1</sup> have also had their devotees, and both are, or were formerly, to be found in those western districts of Asia Minor with which we are here concerned. To begin with vapours, we may take as an illustration of their deadly effect the Guevo Upas, or Valley of Poison, near Batur in Java. It is the crater of an extinct volcano, about half a mile in circumference, and from thirty to thirty-five feet deep. Neither man nor beast can descend to the bottom and live. The ground is covered with the carcasses of tigers, deer, birds, and even the bones of men, all killed by the abundant emanations of carbonic acid gas which exhale from the soil. Animals let down into it die in a few minutes. The whole range of hills is volcanic. Two neighbouring craters constantly emit smoke.<sup>2</sup> In another crater of Java, near the volcano Talaga Bodas, the sulphureous exhalations have proved fatal to tigers, birds, and countless insects; and the soft parts of these creatures, such as fibres, muscles, hair, and skin, are well preserved, while the bones are corroded or destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

The ancients were acquainted with such noxious vapours in their own country, and they regarded the vents from which they were discharged as entrances to the infernal regions.<sup>4</sup> The Greeks called them places of Pluto (*Plutonia*) or places of Charon (*Charonia*).<sup>5</sup> In Italy the vapours were

Poisonous  
mephitic  
vapours.

Places of  
Pluto or  
Charon.

enterprise, and the Lacedaemonians were never a seafaring folk. See C. Neumann und J. Pertsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 330 sq., 335 sq. For Laconian sanctuaries of Poseidon see Pausanias, iii. 11. 9, iii. 12. 5, iii. 14. 2 and 7, iii. 15. 10, iii. 20. 2, iii. 21. 5, iii. 25. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 391 sqq., 590.

<sup>2</sup> Extract from a Letter of Mr.

Alexander Loudon," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, ii. (1832) pp. 60-62; Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 590.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Ch. Lyell, *l.c.*

<sup>4</sup> Lucretius, vi. 738 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Strabo, v. 4. 5, p. 244, xii. 8. 17, p. 579, xiii. 4. 14, p. 629, xiv. i. 11 and 44, pp. 636, 649; Cicero, *De divinatione*, i. 36. 79; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 208. Compare [Aristotle,] *De mundo*, 4, p. 395 B, ed. Bekker.

The  
valley of  
Amsanctus.

personified as a goddess, who bore the name of Mefitis and was worshipped in various parts of the peninsula.<sup>1</sup> She had a temple in the famous valley of Amsanctus in the land of the Hirpini, where the exhalations, supposed to be the breath of Pluto himself, were of so deadly a character that all who set foot on the spot died.<sup>2</sup> The place is a glen, partly wooded with chestnut trees, among limestone hills, distant about four miles from the town of Frigento. Here, under a steep shelving bank of decomposed limestone, there is a pool of dark ash-coloured water, which continually bubbles up with an explosion like distant thunder. A rapid stream of the same blackish water rushes into the pool from under the barren rocky hill, but the fall is not more than a few feet. A little higher up are apertures in the ground, through which warm blasts of sulphuretted hydrogen are constantly issuing with more or less noise, according to the size of the holes. These blasts are no doubt what the ancients deemed the breath of Pluto. The pool is now called *Mefite* and the holes *Mefitinelle*. On the other side of the pool is a smaller pond called the *Coccao*, or Cauldron, because it appears to be perpetually boiling. Thick masses of mephitic vapour, visible a hundred yards off, float in rapid undulations on its surface. The exhalations given off by these waters are sometimes fatal, especially when they are borne on a high wind. But as the carbonic acid gas does not naturally rise more than two or three feet from the ground, it is possible in calm weather to walk round the pools, though to stoop is difficult and to fall would be dangerous. The ancient temple of Mefitis has been replaced by a shrine of the martyred Santa Felicità.<sup>3</sup>

Sanctuaries  
of Charon  
or Pluto  
in Caria.

Similar discharges of poisonous vapours took place at various points in the volcanic district of Caria, and were the

<sup>1</sup> Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* vii. 84, who says that some people looked on Mefitis as a god, the male partner of Leucothoe, to whom he stood as Adonis to Venus or as Virbius to Diana. As to Mefitis see L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 144 sq.; R. Peter, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2519 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Virgil, *Aen.* vii. 563, 571, with

the commentary of Servius; Cicero, *De divinatione*, i. 36. 79; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 208.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Mr. Hamilton (British Envoy at the Court of Naples), in *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, ii. (1832) pp. 62-65; W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, i. 127; H. Nissen, *Italische Landeskunde*, i. 242, 271, ii. 819 sq.



object of superstitious veneration in antiquity. Thus at the village of Thymbria there was a sacred cave which gave out deadly emanations, and the place was deemed a sanctuary of Charon.<sup>1</sup> A similar cave might be seen at the village of Acharaca near Nysa, in the valley of the Maeander. Here, below the cave, there was a fine grove with a temple dedicated to Pluto and Proserpine. The place was sacred to Pluto, yet sick people resorted to it for the restoration of their health. They lived in the neighbouring village, and the priests prescribed for them according to the revelations which they received from the two deities in dreams. Often the priests would take the patients to the cave and leave them there for days without food. Sometimes the sufferers themselves were favoured with revelations in dreams, but they always acted under the spiritual direction of the priests. To all but the sick the place was unapproachable and fatal. Once a year a festival was held in the village, and then afflicted folk came in crowds to be rid of their ailments. About the hour of noon on that day a number of athletic young men, their naked bodies greased with oil, used to carry a bull up to the cave and there let it go. But the beast had not taken a few steps into the cavern before it fell to the ground and expired: so deadly was the vapour.<sup>2</sup>

Another Plutonian sanctuary of the same sort existed at Hierapolis, in the upper valley of the Maeander, on the borders of Lydia and Phrygia.<sup>3</sup> Here under a brow of the hill there was a deep cave with a narrow mouth just large enough to admit the body of a man. A square space in front of the cave was railed off, and within the railing there hung so thick a cloudy vapour that it was hardly possible to see the ground. In calm weather people could step up to the railing with safety, but to pass within it was instant death. Bulls driven into the enclosure fell to the earth and were dragged out lifeless; and sparrows, which spectators by

Sanctuary of Pluto at the Lydian or Phrygian Hierapolis.

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiv. 1. 11, p. 636.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xiv. 1. 44, pp. 649 sq. A coin of Nysa shows the bull carried to the sacrifice by six naked youths and preceded by a naked flute-player. See B. V. Head, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lydia*, pp. lxxxiii. 181, pl. xx. 10. Strabo was familiar with this neigh-

bourhood, for he tells us (xiv. 1. 48, p. 650) that in his youth he studied at Nysa under the philosopher Aristodemus.

<sup>3</sup> Some of the ancients assigned Hierapolis to Lydia, and others to Phrygia (W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 84 sq.).

way of experiment allowed to fly into the mist, dropped dead at once. Yet the eunuch priests of the Great Mother Goddess could enter the railed-off area with impunity; nay more, they used to go up to the very mouth of the cave, stoop, and creep into it for a certain distance, holding their breath; but there was a look on their faces as if they were being choked. Some people ascribed the immunity of the priests to the divine protection, others to the use of antidotes.<sup>1</sup>

### § 7. *Worship of Hot Springs*

The hot  
springs and  
petrified  
cascades of  
Hierapolis.

The mysterious chasm of Hierapolis, with its deadly mist, has not been discovered in modern times; indeed it would seem to have vanished even in antiquity.<sup>2</sup> It may have been destroyed by an earthquake. But another marvel of the Sacred City remains to this day. The hot springs with their calcareous deposit, which, like a wizard's wand, turns all that it touches to stone, excited the wonder of the ancients, and the course of ages has only enhanced the fantastic splendour of the great transformation scene. The stately ruins of Hierapolis occupy a broad shelf or terrace on the mountain-side commanding distant views of extraordinary beauty and grandeur, from the dark precipices and dazzling snows of Mount Cadmus away to the burnt summits of Phrygia, fading in rosy tints into the blue of the sky. Hills, broken by wooded ravines, rise behind the city. In front the terrace falls away in cliffs three hundred feet high into the desolate treeless valley of the Lycus. Over the face of these cliffs the hot streams have poured or trickled for thousands of years, encrusting them with a pearly white substance like salt or driven snow. The appearance of the whole is as if a mighty river, some two miles broad, had been suddenly arrested in the act of falling over a great cliff and transformed into white marble. It is a petrified Niagara. The illusion is strongest in winter or in cool summer mornings when the mist from the

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiii. 4-14, pp. 629 *sq.*; Dio Cassius, lxxiii. 27. 3; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 208; Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 6. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus (*l.c.*) speaks as if the cave no longer existed in his time.



hot springs hangs in the air, like a veil of spray resting on the foam of the waterfall. A closer inspection of the white cliff, which attracts the traveller's attention at a distance of twenty miles, only adds to its beauty and changes one illusion for another. For now it seems to be a glacier, its long pendent stalactites looking like icicles, and the snowy whiteness of its smooth expanse being tinged here and there with delicate hues of blue, rose and green, all the colours of the rainbow. These petrified cascades of Hierapolis are among the wonders of the world. Indeed they have probably been without a rival in their kind ever since the famous white and pink terraces or staircases of Rotomahana in New Zealand were destroyed by a volcanic eruption some twenty years ago.

The hot springs which have wrought these miracles at Hierapolis rise in a large deep pool among the vast and imposing ruins of the ancient city. The water is of a greenish-blue tint, but clear and transparent. At the bottom may be seen the white marble columns of a beautiful Corinthian colonnade, which must formerly have encircled the sacred pool. Shimmering through the green-blue water they look like the ruins of a Naiad's palace. Clumps of oleanders and pomegranate-trees overhang the little lake and add to its charm. Yet the enchanted spot has its dangers. Bubbles of carbonic acid gas rise incessantly from the bottom and mount like flickering particles of silver to the surface. Birds and beasts which come to drink of the water are sometimes found dead on the bank, stifled by the noxious vapour; and the villagers tell of bathers who have been overpowered by it and drowned, or dragged down, as they say, to death by the water-spirit.

The hot pool of Hierapolis with its deadly exhalations.

The streams of hot water, no longer regulated by the care of a religious population, have for centuries been allowed to overflow their channels and to spread unchecked over the tableland. By the deposit which they leave behind they have raised the surface of the ground many feet, their white ridges concealing the ruins and impeding the footstep, except where the old channels, filled up solidly to the brim, now form hard level footpaths, from which the traveller may survey the strange scene without quitting the saddle. In

Deposits left by the waters of Hierapolis.

antiquity the husbandmen used purposely to lead the water in rills round their lands, and thus in a few years their fields and vineyards were enclosed with walls of solid stone. The water was also peculiarly adapted for the dyeing of woollen stuffs. Tinged with dyes extracted from certain roots, it imparted to cloths dipped in it the finest shades of purple and scarlet.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot doubt that Hierapolis owed its reputation as a holy city in great part to its hot springs and mephitic vapours. The curative virtue of mineral and thermal springs was well known to the ancients, and it would be interesting, if it were possible, to trace the causes which have gradually eliminated the superstitious element from the use of such waters, and so converted many old seats of volcanic religion into the medicinal baths of modern times. It was an article of Greek faith that all hot springs were sacred to Hercules.<sup>2</sup> "Who ever heard of cold baths that were sacred to Hercules?" asks Injustice in Aristophanes; and Justice admits that the brawny hero's patronage of hot baths was the excuse alleged by young men for sprawling all day in the steaming water when they ought to have been sweating in the gymnasium.<sup>3</sup> Hot springs were said to have been first produced for the refreshment of Hercules after his labours; some ascribed the kindly thought and deed to Athena, others to Hephaestus, and others to the nymphs.<sup>4</sup> The warm water of these

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, xiii. 4. 14, pp. 629, 630; Vitruvius, viii. 3. 10. For modern descriptions of Hierapolis see R. Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor*<sup>2</sup> (London, 1776), pp. 228-235; Ch. Fellows, *Journal written during an Excursion in Asia Minor* (London, 1839), pp. 283-285; W. J. Hamilton, *Remarks in Asia Minor, Pontus, and Armenia*, i. 517-521; E. Renan, *Saint Paul*, pp. 357 sq.; E. J. Davis, *Anatolia* (London, 1874), pp. 97-112; É. Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, ix. 510-512; W. Cochran, *Pen and Pencil Sketches in Asia Minor* (London, 1887), pp. 387-390; W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishopricks of Phrygia*, i. 84 sqq. The temperature of the hot pool varies from 85 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The volcanic district of Tuscany which skirts the Apennines abounds in hot calcareous

springs which have produced phenomena like those of Hierapolis. Indeed the whole ground is in some places coated over with tufa and travertine, which have been deposited by the water, and, like the ground at Hierapolis, it sounds hollow under the foot. See Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 397 sqq. As to the terraces of Rotomahana in New Zealand, which were destroyed by an eruption of Mount Taravera in 1886, see R. Taylor, *Ti Ika A Maui, or New Zealand and its Inhabitants*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 464-469.

<sup>2</sup> Athenæus, xii. 6, p. 512.

<sup>3</sup> Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 1044-1054.

<sup>4</sup> Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 1050; Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* xii. 25; Suidas and Hesychius, s.v. Ἡράκλεια λουτρά; Apostolius, viii. 66; Zenobius, vi. 49; Diogenianus, v. 7; Plutarch, *Proverbia Alexandrinorum*,



sources appears to have been used especially to heal diseases of the skin; for a Greek proverb, "the itch of Hercules," was applied to persons in need of hot baths for the scab.<sup>1</sup> On the strength of his connection with medicinal springs Hercules set up as a patron of the healing art. In heaven, if we can trust Lucian, he even refused to give place to Aesculapius himself, and the difference between them led to a very unseemly brawl. "Do you mean to say," demanded Hercules of his father Zeus, in a burst of indignation, "that this apothecary is to sit down to table before me?" To this the apothecary replies with much acrimony, recalling certain painful episodes in the private life of the burly hero. Finally the dispute is settled by Zeus, who decides in favour of Aesculapius on the ground that he died before Hercules, and is therefore entitled to rank as senior god.<sup>2</sup>

Among the hot springs sacred to Hercules the most famous were those which rose in the pass of Thermopylae, and gave to the defile its name of the Hot Gates.<sup>3</sup> The warm baths, called by the natives "the Pots," were enlarged and improved for the use of invalids by the wealthy sophist Herodes Atticus in the second century of our era. An altar of Hercules stood beside them.<sup>4</sup> According to one story, the hot springs were here produced for his refreshment by the goddess Athena.<sup>5</sup> They exist to this day apparently unchanged, although the recession of the sea has converted what used to be a narrow pass into a wide, swampy flat, through which the broad but shallow, turbid stream of the Sperchius creeps sluggishly seaward. On the other side the rugged mountains descend in crags and precipices to the pass, their grey, rocky sides tufted with low wood or bushes wherever vegetation can find a foothold, and their summits fringed along the sky-line with pines. They remind a Scotchman of the "crags, knolls, and mounds confusedly

Hot  
springs of  
Hercules  
at Thermo-  
pylae.

21; Diodorus Siculus, iv. 23. 1, v. 3.  
4. Another story was that Hercules, like Moses, produced the water by smiting the rock with his club (Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 4).

<sup>1</sup> Apostolius, viii. 68; Zenobius, vi. 49; Diogenianus, v. 7; Plutarch, *Proverbia Alexandrinorum*, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *Dialogi Deorum*, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, ix. 4. 13, p. 428.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, vii. 176; Pausanias, iv. 35. 9; Philostratus, *Vit. Sophist.* li. 1. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 1050.

hurled" in which Ben Venue comes down to the Silver Strand of Loch Katrine. The principal spring bursts from the rocks just at the foot of the steepest and loftiest part of the range. After forming a small pool it flows in a rapid stream eastward, skirting the foot of the mountains. The water is so hot that it is almost painful to hold the hands in it, at least near the source, and steam rises thickly from its surface along the course of the brook. Indeed the clouds of white steam and the strong sulphurous smell acquaint the traveller with his approach to the famous spot before he comes in sight of the springs. The water is clear, but has the appearance of being of a deep sea-blue or sea-green colour. This appearance it takes from the thick, slimy deposits of blue-green sulphur which line the bed of the stream. From its source the blue, steaming, sulphur-reeking brook rushes eastward for a few hundred yards at the foot of the mountain, and is then joined by the water of another spring, which rises much more tranquilly in a sort of natural bath among the rocks. The sides of this bath are not so thickly coated with sulphur as the banks of the stream; hence its water, about two feet deep, is not so blue. Just beyond it there is a second and larger bath, which, from its square shape and smooth sides, would seem to be in part artificial. These two baths are probably the Pots mentioned by ancient writers. They are still used by bathers, and a few wooden dressing-rooms are provided for the accommodation of visitors. Some of the water is conducted in an artificial channel to turn a mill about half a mile off at the eastern end of the pass. The rest crosses the flat to find its way to the sea. In its passage it has coated the swampy ground with a white crust, which sounds hollow under the tread.<sup>1</sup>

Hot  
springs of  
Hercules at  
Aedepsus.

We may conjecture that these remarkable springs furnished the principal reason for associating Hercules with this district, and for laying the scene of his fiery death on the top of the neighbouring Mount Oeta. The district is

<sup>1</sup> I have described Thermopylae as I saw it in November 1895. Compare W. M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, ii. 33 sqq.; E. Dodwell, *Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece*, ii. 66 sqq.; K. G.

Viedler, *Reise durch alle Theile des Königreichs Griechenland*, i. 207 sqq.; L. Ross, *Reisen des Königs Otto in Griechenland*, i. 90 sqq.; C. Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland*, i. 92 sqq.



volcanic, and has often been shaken by earthquakes.<sup>1</sup> Across the strait the island of Euboea has suffered from the same cause and at the same time; and on its southern shore sulphureous springs, like those of Thermopylae, but much hotter and more powerful, were in like manner dedicated to Hercules.<sup>2</sup> The strong medicinal qualities of the waters, which are especially adapted for the cure of skin diseases and gout, have attracted patients in ancient and modern times. Sulla took the waters here for his gout;<sup>3</sup> and in the days of Plutarch the neighbouring town of Aedepsus, situated in a green valley about two miles from the springs, was one of the most fashionable resorts of Greece. Elegant and commodious buildings, an agreeable country, and abundance of fish and game united with the health-giving properties of the baths to draw crowds of idlers to the place, especially in the prime of the glorious Greek spring, the height of the season at Aedepsus. While some watched the dancers dancing or listened to the strains of the harp, others passed the time in discourse, lounging in the shade of cloisters or pacing the shore of the beautiful strait with its prospect of mountains beyond mountains immortalised in story across the water.<sup>4</sup> Of all this Greek elegance and luxury hardly a vestige remains. Yet the healing springs flow now as freely as of old. In the course of time the white and yellow calcareous deposit which the water leaves behind it, has formed a hillock at the foot of the mountains, and the stream now falls in a steaming cascade from the face of the rock into the sea.<sup>5</sup> Once, after an earthquake, the springs ceased to flow for three days, and at the same time the hot springs of Thermopylae dried

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides, iii. 87 and 89; Strabo, i. 3. 20, pp. 60 *sq.*; C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 321-323.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Meteora*, ii. 8, p. 366 A, ed. Bekker; Strabo, ix. 4. 2, p. 425. Aristotle expressly recognised the connection of the springs with earthquakes, which he tells us were very common in this district. As to the earthquakes of Euboea see also Thucydides, iii. 87, 89; Strabo, i. 3. 16, and 20, pp. 58, 60 *sq.*

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Sulla*, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviviales*, iv. 4. 1; *id.*, *De fraterno Amore*, 17.

<sup>5</sup> As to the hot springs of Aedepsus (the modern *Lipso*) see K. G. Fiedler, *Reise durch alle Theile des Königreichs Griechenland*, i. 487-492; H. N. Ulrichs, *Reisen und Forschungen in Griechenland*, ii. 233-235; C. Borsian, *Geographie von Griechenland*, ii. 409; C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 342-344.

up.<sup>1</sup> The incident proves the relation of these Baths of Hercules on both sides of the strait to each other and to volcanic agency. On another occasion a cold spring suddenly burst out beside the hot springs of Aedepsus, and as its water was supposed to be peculiarly beneficial to health, patients hastened from far and near to drink of it. But the generals of King Antigonos, anxious to raise a revenue, imposed a tax on the use of the water; and the spring, as if in disgust at being turned to so base a use, disappeared as suddenly as it had come.<sup>2</sup>

Reasons  
for the  
association  
of Hercules  
with hot  
springs.

The association of Hercules with hot springs was not confined to Greece itself. Greek influence extended it to Sicily,<sup>3</sup> Italy,<sup>4</sup> and even to Dacia.<sup>5</sup> Why the hero should have been chosen as the patron of thermal waters, it is hard to say. Yet it is worth while, perhaps, to remember that such springs combine in a manner the twofold and seemingly discordant principles of water and fire,<sup>6</sup> of fertility and destruction, and that the death of Hercules in the flames seems to connect him with the fiery element. Further, the apparent conflict of the two principles is by no means as absolute as at first sight we might be tempted to suppose; for heat is as necessary as moisture to the support of animal and vegetable life. Even volcanic fires have their beneficent aspect, since their products lend a more generous flavour to the juice of the grape. The ancients themselves,

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, i. 3. 20, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Athenaeus, iii. 4, p. 73, E, D.

<sup>3</sup> The hot springs of Himera (the modern *Termini*) were said to have been produced for the refreshment of the weary Hercules. See Diodorus Siculus, iv. 23. 1, v. 3. 4; Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* xii. 25. The hero is said to have taught the Syracusans to sacrifice a bull annually to Proserpine at the Blue Spring (*Cyane*) near Syracuse; the beasts were drowned in the water of the pool. See Diodorus Siculus, iv. 23. 4, v. 4. 1 sq. As to the spring, which is now thickly surrounded by tall papyrus-plants introduced by the Arabs, see K. Baedeker, *Southern Italy*,<sup>7</sup> pp. 356, 357.

<sup>4</sup> The splendid baths of Allifae in Samnium, of which there are con-

siderable remains, were sacred to Hercules. See G. Wilmanns, *Exempla Inscriptionum Latinarum*, No. 735 C; H. Nissen, *Italische Landeskunde*, ii. 798. It is characteristic of the volcanic nature of the springs that the same inscription which mentions these baths of Hercules records their destruction by an earthquake.

<sup>5</sup> H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 3891.

<sup>6</sup> Speaking of thermal springs Lyell observes that the description of them "might almost with equal propriety have been given under the head of 'igneous causes,' as they are agents of a mixed nature, being at once igneous and aqueous" (*Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 392).



as we have seen, perceived the connection between good wine and volcanic soil, and proposed more or less seriously to interpret the vine-god Dionysus as a child of the fire.<sup>1</sup> As a patron of hot springs Hercules combined the genial elements of heat and moisture, and may therefore have stood, in one of his many aspects, for the principle of fertility. In Syria childless women still resort to hot springs in order to procure offspring from the saint or the jinnee of the waters.<sup>2</sup> A like train of thought perhaps led to the association of Hercules with hot springs. As the ideal of manly strength he may have been deemed the father of many of his worshippers, and Greek wives may have gone on pilgrimage to his steaming waters in order to obtain the wish of their hearts.

How far these considerations may serve to explain the custom of burning him, or gods identified with him, in effigy or in the person of a human being, is a question which deserves to be considered.

The Indians of Nicaragua used to sacrifice men, women, and children to the active volcano Massaya, flinging them into the craters: we are told that the victims went willingly to their fate.<sup>3</sup> In the island of Siao, to the north of Celebes, a child was formerly sacrificed every year in order to keep the volcano Goowoong Awoo quiet. The poor wretch was tortured to death at a festival which lasted nine days. In later times the place of the child has been taken by a wooden puppet, which is hacked to pieces in the same way. The Galelareese of Halmahera say that the Sultan of Ternate used annually to require some human victims, who were cast into the crater of the volcano to save the island from its ravages.<sup>4</sup> The Sandwich Islanders were formerly in the habit of throwing vast numbers of hogs into the craters of the great volcano Kirauea during an eruption or when an eruption was threatening. Further, they cast hogs into the rolling tide of lava to appease the gods and stay

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> S. I. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, pp. 116 sq.; Mrs. H. H. Spoer, "The Powers of Evil in Jerusalem," *Folk-lore*, xviii. (1907) p. 55. See above, p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* (Madrid, 1851-1855), iv. 74.

<sup>4</sup> A. C. Kruijt, *Het Animisme in den Indischen Archipel* (The Hague, 1906), pp. 497 sq.

Sacrifices  
to  
volcanoes.

its progress.<sup>1</sup> In Java the volcano Bromok is annually worshipped by people who throw offerings of cocoa-nuts, plantains, rice, chickens, cloth, money, and so forth into the crater.<sup>2</sup> On the slope of Mount Smeroe, another active volcano in Java, there are two small idols, which the natives worship and pray to when they ascend the mountain. They lay food before the images to obtain the favour of the god of the volcano.<sup>3</sup> In antiquity people cast into the craters of Etna vessels of gold and silver and all kinds of victims. If the fire swallowed up the offerings, the omen was good; but if it rejected them, some evil was sure to befall the offerer.<sup>4</sup> These examples suggest that a custom of burning men or images may possibly be derived from a practice of throwing them into the craters of active volcanoes in order to appease the dreaded spirits or gods who dwell there. But unless we reckon the fires of Mount Argæus in Cappadocia<sup>5</sup> and of Mount Chimaera in Lycia,<sup>6</sup> there is apparently no record of any mountain in Western Asia which has been in eruption within historical times. On the whole, then, we conclude that the Asiatic custom of burning kings or gods

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*,<sup>2</sup> iv. 250. Compare *ibid.* pp. 236, 350.

<sup>2</sup> W. B. d'Almeida, *Life in Java*, i. 166-173.

<sup>3</sup> I. A. Stigand, in *The Geographical Journal*, xxviii. (1906) pp. 621, 624.

<sup>4</sup> Pausanias, iii. 23. 9. Some have thought that Pausanias confused the crater of Etna with the *Lago di Naftia*, a pool near Palagonia in the interior of Sicily, of which the water, impregnated with naphtha and sulphur, is thrown into violent ebullition by jets of volcanic gas. See [Aristotle,] *Mirab. Auscult.* 57; Macrobius, *Saturn.* v. 19. 26 sqq.; Diodorus Siculus, xi. 89; Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. Πάλια; E. H. Bunbury, in W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, ii. 533 sq. The author of the ancient Latin poem *Aëtnea* says (vv. 340 sq.) that people offered incense to the celestial deities on the top of Etna.

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 157 sq.

<sup>6</sup> On Mount Chimaera in Lycia a flame burned perpetually which neither

earth nor water could extinguish. See Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 236, v. 100; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* vi. 288; Seneca, *Epist.* x. 3. 3; Diodorus, quoted by Photius, *Bibliotheca*, p. 212 B, 10 sqq., ed. Bekker. This perpetual flame was rediscovered by Captain Beaufort near Porto Genovese on the coast of Lycia. It issues from the side of a hill of crumbly serpentine rock, giving out an intense heat, but no smoke. "Trees, brushwood, and weeds grow close round this little crater, a small stream trickles down the hill hard by, and the ground does not appear to feel the effect of its heat at more than a few feet distance." The fire is not accompanied by earthquakes or noises; it ejects no stones and emits no noxious vapours. There is nothing but a brilliant and perpetual flame, at which the shepherds often cook their food. See Fr. Beaufort, *Karmania* (London, 1817), p. 46; compare T. A. B. Spratt and E. Forbes, *Travels in Lycia* (London, 1847), ii. 181 sq.



was probably in no way connected with volcanic phenomena. Yet it was perhaps worth while to raise the question of their connection, even though it has received only a negative answer. The whole subject of the influence which physical environment has exercised on the history of religion deserves to be studied with more attention than it has yet received.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the foregoing discussion I have confined myself, so far as concerns Asia, to the volcanic regions of Cappadocia, Lydia, and Caria. But Syria and Palestine, the home of Adonis and Melcarth, "abound in volcanic appearances, and very extensive areas have been shaken, at different periods, with great destruction of cities and loss of lives. Continual mention is made in history of the ravages committed by earthquakes in Sidon, Tyre, Berytus, Laodicea, and Antioch, and in the island of Cyprus. The country around the Dead Sea exhibits in some spots layers of sulphur and bitumen, forming a superficial deposit, supposed by Mr. Tristram to be of volcanic origin" (Sir Ch. Lyell, *Principles of Geology*,<sup>12</sup> i. 592 sq.). As to the earthquakes of Syria and

Phoenicia see Strabo, i. 3. 16, p. 58; Lucretius, vi. 585; Josephus, *Antiquit. Jud.* xv. 5. 2; *id.*, *Bell. Jud.* i. 19. 3; W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book, Central Palestine and Phœnicia*, pp. 568-574; Ed. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*,<sup>3</sup> ii. 422-424. It is said that in the reign of the Emperor Justin the city of Antioch was totally destroyed by a dreadful earthquake, in which three hundred thousand people perished (Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, ii. 14). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis xix. 24-28) has been plausibly explained as the effect of an earthquake liberating large quantities of petroleum and inflammable gases. See S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*,<sup>4</sup> pp. 202 sq.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE RITUAL OF ADONIS

Results  
of the  
preceding  
inquiry.

THUS far we have dealt with the myth of Adonis and the legends which associated him with Byblus and Paphos. A discussion of these legends led us to the conclusion that among Semitic peoples in early times, Adonis, the divine lord of the city, was often personated by priestly kings or other members of the royal family, and that these his human representatives were of old put to death, whether periodically or occasionally, in their divine character. Further, we found that certain traditions and monuments of Asia Minor seem to preserve traces of a similar practice. As time went on, the cruel custom was apparently mitigated in various ways, for example, by substituting an effigy or an animal for the man, or by allowing the destined victim to escape with a merely make-believe sacrifice. The evidence of all this is drawn from a variety of scattered and often ambiguous indications: it is fragmentary, it is uncertain, and the conclusions built upon it inevitably partake of the weakness of the foundation. Where the records are so imperfect, as they happen to be in this branch of our subject, the element of hypothesis must enter largely into any attempt to piece together and interpret the disjointed facts. How far the interpretations here proposed are sound, I leave to future inquiries to determine.

Our  
knowledge  
of the rites  
of Adonis  
derived  
chiefly  
from Greek  
writers.

From dim regions of the past, where we have had to grope our way with small help from the lamp of history, it is a relief to pass to those later periods of classical antiquity on which contemporary Greek writers have shed the light of their clear intelligence. To them we owe



almost all that we know for certain about the rites of Adonis. The Semites who practised the worship have said little about it; at all events little that they said has come down to us. Accordingly, the following account of the ritual is derived mainly from Greek authors who saw what they describe; and it applies to ages in which the growth of humane feeling had softened some of the harsher features of the worship.

At the festivals of Adonis, which were held in Western Asia and in Greek lands, the death of the god was annually mourned, with a bitter wailing, chiefly by women; images of him, dressed to resemble corpses, were carried out as to burial and then thrown into the sea or into springs;<sup>1</sup> and in some places his revival was celebrated on the following day.<sup>2</sup> But at different places the ceremonies varied somewhat in the manner and apparently also in the season of their celebration. At Alexandria images of Aphrodite and Adonis were displayed on two couches; beside them were set ripe fruits of all kinds, cakes, plants growing in flower-pots, and green bowers twined with anise. The marriage of the lovers was celebrated one day, and on the morrow women attired as mourners, with streaming hair and bared breasts, bore the image of the dead Adonis to the sea-shore and committed it to the waves. Yet they sorrowed not without hope, for they sang that the lost one would come back again.<sup>3</sup> The date at which this Alexandrian ceremony was observed is not expressly stated; but from the mention of the ripe fruits it has been inferred that it took place in late summer.<sup>4</sup> In the great Phœnician sanctuary of Astarte at Byblus the death of Adonis was annually mourned, to the shrill wailing notes of the flute, with weeping, lamentation, and beating of the breast; but

Festivals of the death and resurrection of Adonis.

The festival at Alexandria.

The festival at Byblus.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 18; *id.*, *Nicias*, 13; Zenobius, *Centur.* i. 49; Theocritus, xv. 132 sqq.; Eustathius on Homer, *Od.* xi. 590.

<sup>2</sup> Besides Lucian (cited below) see Jerome, *Comment.* in *Ezechiel.* viii. 14, "in qua (solemnitate) plangitur quasi mortuus, et postea reviviscit, canitur atque laudatur . . . interfectionem et resurrectionem Adonidis planctu et gaudio prosequens"; Origen,

"Selecta in Ezechielem" (Migne's *Patrologia Græca*, xiii. 800), δοκοῦσι γὰρ κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν τελερὰς τινας ποιεῖν πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι θρηνησὺν αὐτὸν [scil. Ἄδωνε] ὡς τεθνηκότα, δεύτερον δὲ ὅτι χαίρουσιν ἐπ' αὐτῷ ὡς ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἀναστάντι.

<sup>3</sup> Theocritus, xv.

<sup>4</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 277.

next day he was believed to come to life again and ascend up to heaven in the presence of his worshippers. The disconsolate believers, left behind on earth, shaved their heads as the Egyptians did on the death of the divine bull Apis; women who could not bring themselves to sacrifice their beautiful tresses had to give themselves up to strangers on a certain day of the festival, and to dedicate to Astarte the wages of their shame.<sup>1</sup>

Date of the  
festival at  
Byblus.

This Phœnician festival appears to have been a vernal one, for its date was determined by the discoloration of the river Adonis, and this has been observed by modern travellers to occur in spring. At that season the red earth washed down from the mountains by the rain tinges the water of the river, and even the sea, for a great way with a blood-red hue, and the crimson stain was believed to be the blood of Adonis, annually wounded to death by the boar on Mount Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> Again, the scarlet anemone is said to have sprung from the blood of Adonis, or to have been stained by it;<sup>3</sup> and as the anemone blooms in Syria about Easter, this may be thought to show that the festival of Adonis, or at least one of his festivals, was held in spring. The name of the flower is probably derived from Naaman ("darling"), which seems to have been an epithet of Adonis. The Arabs still call the anemone

The  
anemone  
and the  
red rose  
the flowers  
of Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 6. See above, p. 33. The flutes used by the Phœnicians in the lament for Adonis are mentioned by Athenæus (iv. 76, p. 174 F), and by Pollux (iv. 76), who say that the same name *gingras* was applied by the Phœnicians both to the flute and to Adonis himself. Compare F. C. Movers, *Die Phœnizier*, i. 243 sq. We have seen that flutes were also played in the Babylonian rites of Tammuz (above, p. 7). Lucian's words, *ἐς τὸν ἡπὸ πένθους*, imply that the ascension of the god was supposed to take place in the presence, if not before the eyes, of the worshipping crowds. The devotion of Byblus to Adonis is noticed also by Strabo (xvi. 2. 18, p. 755).

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *op. cit.* 8. The discoloration of the river and the sea was observed

by H. Maundrell on  $\frac{17}{27}$  March  $\frac{1696}{1697}$ .

See his "Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem," in Bohn's *Early Travels in Palestine*, edited by Thomas Wright (London, 1848), pp. 411 sq. Renan remarked the discoloration at the beginning of February (*Mission de Phénicie*, p. 283). In his well-known lines on the subject Milton has laid the mourning in summer:—

*Thammuz came next behind,  
Whose annual wound in Lebanon  
allur'd*

*The Syrian damels to lament his fate  
In amorous ditties all a summer's day.*

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Metam.* x. 735; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* v. 72; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 831. Bion, on the other hand, represents the anemone as sprung from the tears of Aphrodite (*Idyl.* i. 66).



"wounds of the Naaman."<sup>1</sup> The red rose also was said to owe its hue to the same sad occasion; for Aphrodite, hastening to her wounded lover, trod on a bush of white roses; the cruel thorns tore her tender flesh, and her sacred blood dyed the white roses for ever red.<sup>2</sup> It would be idle, perhaps, to lay much weight on evidence drawn from the calendar of flowers, and in particular to press an argument so fragile as the bloom of the rose. Yet so far as it counts at all, the tale which links the damask rose with the death of Adonis points to a summer rather than to a spring celebration of his passion. In Attica, certainly, the festival fell at the height of summer. For the fleet which Athens fitted out against Syracuse, and by the destruction of which her power was permanently crippled, sailed at midsummer, and by an ominous coincidence the sombre rites of Adonis were being celebrated at the very time. As the troops marched down to the harbour to embark, the streets through which they passed were lined with coffins and corpse-like effigies, and the air was rent with the noise of women wailing for the dead Adonis. The circumstance cast a gloom over the sailing of the most splendid armament that Athens ever sent to sea.<sup>3</sup> Many ages afterwards, when the Emperor Julian made his first entry into Antioch, he found in like manner the gay, the luxurious capital of the East plunged in mimic grief for the annual death of Adonis; and if he had any presentiment of coming evil, the voices of lamentation which struck upon his ear must have seemed to sound his knell.<sup>4</sup>

Festivals of  
Adonis at  
Athens and  
Antioch.

The resemblance of these ceremonies to the Indian and

<sup>1</sup> W. Robertson Smith, "Ctesias and the Semiramis Legend," *English Historical Review*, li. (1887) p. 307. following Lagarde.

<sup>2</sup> J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 831; *Geoponica*, xi. 17; *Mythographi Græci*, ed. A. Westermann, p. 359. Compare Bion, *Idyl.* i. 66; Pausanias, vi. 24. 7; Philostratus, *Epist.* i. and iii.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 18; *id.*, *Nicias*, 13. The date of the sailing of the fleet is given by Thucydides (vi. 30, *ἀπὸ τοῦ μεσοῦρος ἡδὴ*), who, with

his habitual contempt for the superstition of his countrymen, disdains to notice the coincidence. Adonis was also bewailed by the Argive women (Pausanias, li. 20. 6), but we do not know at what season of the year the lamentation took place. Inscriptions prove that processions in honour of Adonis were held in the Piræus, and that a society of his worshippers existed at Solyma in Caria. See Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Græcarum*,<sup>2</sup> Nos. 726, 741.

<sup>4</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, xlii. 9. 15.

Resemblance of these rites to Indian and European ceremonies.

The death and resurrection of Adonis a mythical expression for the annual decay and revival of plant life.

European ceremonies which I have described elsewhere is obvious. In particular, apart from the somewhat doubtful date of its celebration, the Alexandrian ceremony is almost identical with the Indian.<sup>1</sup> In both of them the marriage of two divine beings, whose affinity with vegetation seems indicated by the fresh plants with which they are surrounded, is celebrated in effigy, and the effigies are afterwards mourned over and thrown into the water.<sup>2</sup> From the similarity of these customs to each other and to the spring and midsummer customs of modern Europe we should naturally expect that they all admit of a common explanation. Hence, if the explanation which I have adopted of the latter is correct, the ceremony of the death and resurrection of Adonis must also have been a dramatic representation of the decay and revival of plant life. The inference thus based on the resemblance of the customs is confirmed by the following features in the legend and ritual of Adonis. His affinity with vegetation comes out at once in the common story of his birth. He was said to have been born from a myrrh-tree, the bark of which bursting, after a ten months' gestation, allowed the lovely infant to come forth. According to some, a boar rent the bark with his tusk and so opened a passage for the babe. A faint rationalistic colour was given to the legend by saying that his mother was a woman named Myrrh, who had been turned into a myrrh-tree soon after she had conceived the child.<sup>3</sup> The use of myrrh as incense at the festival of Adonis may have given rise to the fable.<sup>4</sup> We have seen that incense was burnt at the corresponding Babylonian rites,<sup>5</sup> just as it was burnt by the idolatrous Hebrews in honour of the Queen of Heaven,<sup>6</sup> who was no other than Astarte. Again, the story that Adonis spent half, or

<sup>1</sup> See *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 105 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> In the Alexandrian ceremony, however, it appears to have been the image of Adonis only which was thrown into the sea.

<sup>3</sup> Apollodorus, *Biblioth.* iii. 14. 4; Schol. on Theocritus, i. 109; Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* 34; J. Tetzels, *Schol. on Lycophron*. 829; Ovid, *Metam.* x. 489 sqq.; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* v. 72, and on *Bucol.* x.

18; Hyginus, *Fab.* 58, 164; Fulgentius, iii. 8. The word Myrrha or Smyrna is borrowed from the Phoenician (Liddell and Scott, *Greek Lexicon*, s.v. *μύρρα*). Hence the mother's name, as well as the son's, was taken directly from the Semites.

<sup>4</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 283, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Above, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah xlv. 17-19.



according to others a third, of the year in the lower world and the rest of it in the upper world,<sup>1</sup> is explained most simply and naturally by supposing that he represented vegetation, especially the corn, which lies buried in the earth half the year and reappears above ground the other half. Certainly of the annual phenomena of nature there is none which suggests so obviously the idea of death and resurrection as the disappearance and reappearance of vegetation in autumn and spring. Adonis has been taken for the sun; but there is nothing in the sun's annual course within the temperate and tropical zones to suggest that he is dead for half or a third of the year and alive for the other half or two-thirds. He might, indeed, be conceived as weakened in winter, but dead he could not be thought to be; his daily reappearance contradicts the supposition. Within the Arctic Circle, where the sun annually disappears for a continuous period which varies from twenty-four hours to six months according to the latitude, his yearly death and resurrection would certainly be an obvious idea; but no one except the unfortunate astronomer Bailly<sup>2</sup> has maintained that the Adonis worship came from the Arctic regions. On the other hand, the annual death and revival of vegetation is a conception which readily presents itself to men in every stage of savagery and civilisation; and the vastness of the scale on which this ever-recurring decay and regeneration takes place, together with man's intimate dependence on it for subsistence, combine to render it the most impressive annual occurrence in nature, at least within the temperate zones. It is no wonder that a phenomenon so important, so striking, and so universal should, by suggesting similar

<sup>1</sup> Schol. on Theocritus, iii. 48; Hyginus, *Astronom.* ii. 7; Lucian, *Dialog. deor.* xi. 1; Cornutus, *De natura deorum*, 28, p. 163 sq. ed. Osannus; Apollodorus, iii. 14. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Bailly, *Lettres sur l'Origine des Sciences* (London and Paris, 1777), pp. 255 sq.; *id.*, *Lettres sur l'Atlantide de Platon* (London and Paris, 1779), pp. 114-125. Carlyle has described how through the sleety drizzle of a

dreary November day poor innocent Bailly was dragged to the scaffold amid the howls and curses of the Parisian mob (*French Revolution*, bk. v. ch. 2). My friend the late Professor C. Bendall showed me a book by a Hindoo gentleman in which it is seriously maintained that the primitive home of the Aryans was within the Arctic regions. See Bâl Gangâdhar Tilak, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas* (Poona and Bombay, 1903).

ideas, have given rise to similar rites in many lands. We may, therefore, accept as probable an explanation of the Adonis worship which accords so well with the facts of nature and with the analogy of similar rites in other lands. Moreover, the explanation is countenanced by a considerable body of opinion amongst the ancients themselves, who again and again interpreted the dying and reviving god as the reaped and sprouting grain.<sup>1</sup>

Tammuz  
or Adonis  
as a corn-  
spirit  
bruised and  
ground in  
a mill.

The character of Tammuz or Adonis as a corn-spirit comes out plainly in an account of his festival given by an Arabic writer of the tenth century. In describing the rites and sacrifices observed at the different seasons of the year by the heathen Syrians of Harran, he

<sup>1</sup> Schol. on Theocritus, iii. 48, ὁ Ἀδωνις, ἥγον· ὁ σίτος ὁ σπειρόμενος, ἐξ μῆρας ἐν τῇ γῇ ποιεῖ ἀπὸ τῆς σπορᾶς καὶ ἐξ μῆρας ἔχει αὐτὸν ἡ Ἀφροδίτη, τοῦτόστις ἡ εὐκροσία τοῦ ἀέρος, καὶ ἐκράτε λαμβάνουσιν αὐτὸν οἱ ἄνθρωποι. Jerome on Ezekiel, viii. 14, "Eadem gentilitas hujuscemodi fabulas poetarum, quae habent turpitudinem, interpretatur subtiliter interfectionem et resurrectionem Adonidis planctu et gaudio praesequens: quorum alterum in seminibus, quae moriuntur in terra, alterum in segetibus, quibus mortua semina renascuntur, ostendi putat." Origen, "Selecta in Ezechielem" (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, xiii. 800), οἱ δὲ περὶ τῆς ἀναγωγῆς τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν μύθων δεῖναι καὶ μετὰ τὴν νομιζομένην θεολογίαν, φασὶ τὸν Ἀδωνιν σύμβολον εἶναι τῶν τῆς γῆς καρπῶν, θρηνησμένων μὲν ὅτε σπείρονται, ἀνισταμένων δὲ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο χαίρειν ποιοῦντων τοῖς γεωργοῖς ὅτε φύονται. Ammianus Marcellinus, xix. 1. 11., "in sollemnibus Adonidis sacris, quod simulacrum aliquod esse frugum adularum religiones mysticae docent," *Id.* xxii. 9. 15, "amato Veneris, ut fabulae fingunt, apri dente feruli deleto, quod in adulto flore sectarum est indicium frugum." Clement of Alexandria, *Hom.* 6. 11 (quoted by W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 281), λαμβάνουσι δὲ καὶ Ἀδωνιν εἰς ὠραλοὺς καρπῶν. *Etymologicum Magnum*, s. v. Ἀδωνις κύρην· δέναναι καὶ ὁ καρπὸς εἶναι Ἀδωνις· αὖν Ἀδωνιός καρπός,

ἀρέσκων. Eusebius, *Præpar. Evang.* iii. 11. 9, Ἀδωνις τῆς τῶν τελευτῶν καρπῶν ἐκτομῇ σύμβολον. Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," iv. *Fragmenta Philosopherum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 32, οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι . . . αὐτὰ τὰ σώματα θεοῦ νομίζαντες . . . Ἴσιν μὲν τὴν γῆν . . . Ἀδωνιν δὲ καρπός. Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 4, τῷ Ἀδωνίδι, τοῦτόστις τῷ Μαῖω . . . ἢ ὡς ἄλλοις δοκεῖ, Ἀδωνις μὲν ἔστιν ὁ καρπός, κτλ. The view that Tammuz or Adonis is a personification of the dying and reviving vegetation is now accepted by many scholars. See P. Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier* (Strasburg, 1890), p. 480; *id.*, *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen*, pp. 411, 560; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Klein-schriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>3</sup> p. 397; A. Jeremias, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, iii. 265; R. Wünsch, *Das Frühlingsfest der Insel Malta* (Leipzig, 1902), p. 21; M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Sémitiques*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 306 sqq.; W. v. Baudissin, "Tammuz," *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirchengeschichte*. Prof. Jastrow regards Tammuz as a god both of the sun and of vegetation (*Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 547, 564, 574, 588). But such a combination of disparate qualities seems artificial and unlikely.



says :—"Tammuz (July). In the middle of this month is the festival of el-Bûgât, that is, of the weeping women, and this is the Tâ-uz festival, which is celebrated in honour of the god Tâ-uz. The women bewail him, because his lord slew him so cruelly, ground his bones in a mill, and then scattered them to the wind. The women (during this festival) eat nothing which has been ground in a mill, but limit their diet to steeped wheat, sweet vetches, dates, raisins, and the like."<sup>1</sup> Tâ-uz, who is no other than Tammuz, is here like Burns's John Barleycorn—

*They wasted o'er a scorching flame  
The marrow of his bones ;  
But a miller us'd him worst of all—  
For he crush'd him between two stones.*<sup>2</sup>

This concentration, so to say, of the nature of Adonis upon the cereal crops is characteristic of the stage of culture reached by his worshippers in historical times. They had left the nomadic life of the wandering hunter and herdsman far behind them ; for ages they had been settled on the land, and had depended for their subsistence mainly on the products of tillage. The berries and roots of the wilderness, the grass of the pastures, which had been matters of vital importance to their ruder forefathers, were now of little moment to them : more and more their thoughts and energies were engrossed by the staple of their life, the corn ; more and more accordingly the propitiation of the deities of fertility in general and of the corn-spirit in particular tended to become the central feature of their religion. The aim they set before themselves in celebrating the rites was thoroughly practical. It was no vague poetical sentiment which prompted them to hail with joy the rebirth of vegetation and to mourn its decline. Hunger, felt or feared, was the mainspring of the worship of Adonis.

It has been suggested by Father Lagrange that the mourning for Adonis was essentially a harvest rite designed to propitiate the corn-god, who was then either perishing under the sickles of the reapers, or being trodden to death

The mourning for Adonis interpreted as a harvest rite.

<sup>1</sup> D. Chwolson, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, ii. 27 ; *id.*, *Ueber Tammuz und die Menschenverehrung*

*bei den alten Babyloniern*, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> The comparison is due to Felix Liebrecht (*Zur Volkskunde*, p. 259).

under the hoofs of the oxen on the threshing-floor. While the men slew him, the women wept crocodile tears at home to appease his natural indignation by a show of grief for his death.<sup>1</sup> The theory fits in well with the dates of the festivals, which fell in spring or summer; for spring and summer, not autumn, are the seasons of the barley and wheat harvests in the lands which worshipped Adonis.<sup>2</sup> Further, the hypothesis is confirmed by the practice of the Egyptian reapers, who lamented, calling upon Isis, when they cut the first corn;<sup>3</sup> and it is recommended by the analogous customs of many hunting tribes, who testify great respect for the animals which they kill and eat.<sup>4</sup>

Thus interpreted the death of Adonis is not the

<sup>1</sup> M. J. Lagrange, *Études sur les Religions Semitiques* (Paris, 1905), pp. 307 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Hence Philo of Alexandria dates the corn-reaping in the middle of spring (*Μεσοὶννοι δὲ λαοὶ ἀγροὺς ἐλάρωνται*, *De special legibus*, i. 183, vol. v. p. 44, ed. L. Cohn). On this subject Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie writes to me: "The Coptic calendar puts on April 2 beginning of wheat harvest in Upper Egypt, May 2 wheat harvest, Lower Egypt. Barley is two or three weeks earlier than wheat in Palestine, but probably less in Egypt. The Palestine harvest is about the time of that in North Egypt." With regard to Palestine we are told that "the harvest begins with the barley in April; in the valley of the Jordan it begins at the end of March. Between the end of the barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest an interval of two or three weeks elapses. Thus as a rule the business of harvest lasts about seven weeks" (J. Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie*, p. 209). "The principal grain crops of Palestine are barley, wheat, lentils, maize, and millet. Of the latter there is very little, and it is all gathered in by the end of May. The maize is then only just beginning to shoot. In the hotter parts of the Jordan valley the barley harvest is over by the end of March, and throughout the country the wheat harvest is at its

height at the end of May, excepting in the highlands of Galilee, where it is about a fortnight later" (H. B. Tristram, *The Land of Israel*,<sup>3</sup> p. 583 sq.). As to Greece, Professor E. A. Gardner tells me that harvest is from April to May in the plains and about a month later in the mountains. He adds that "barley may, then, be assigned to the latter part of April, wheat to May in the lower ground, but you know the great difference of climate between different parts; there is the same difference of a month in the vintage." Mrs. Hawes (Miss Boyd), who excavated at Gournia, tells me that in Crete the barley is cut in April and the beginning of May, and that the wheat is cut and threshed from about the twentieth of June, though the dates naturally vary somewhat with the height of the place above the sea. June is also the season when the wheat is threshed in Euboea (R. A. Arnold, *From the Levant* (London, 1868), i. 250). Thus it seems possible that the spring festival of Adonis coincided with the cutting of the first barley in March, and his summer festival with the threshing of the last wheat in June. Father Lagrange (*op. cit.*, pp. 305 sq.) argues that the rites of Adonis were always celebrated in summer at the solstice of June or soon afterwards.

<sup>3</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 2. See below, pp. 296, 347 sq.

<sup>4</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 396 sqq.



natural decay of vegetation in general under the summer heat or the winter cold; it is the violent destruction of the corn by man, who cuts it down on the field, stamps it to pieces on the threshing-floor, and grinds it to powder in the mill. That this was indeed the principal aspect in which Adonis presented himself in later times to the agricultural peoples of the Levant, may be admitted; but whether from the beginning he had been the corn and nothing but the corn, may be doubted. At an earlier period he may have been to the herdsman, above all, the tender herbage which sprouts after rain, offering rich pasture to the lean and hungry cattle. Earlier still he may have embodied the spirit of the nuts and berries which the autumn woods yield to the savage hunter and his squaw. And just as the husbandman must propitiate the spirit of the corn which he consumes, so the herdsman must appease the spirit of the grass and leaves which his cattle munch, and the hunter must soothe the spirit of the roots which he digs, and of the fruits which he gathers from the bough. In all cases the propitiation of the injured and angry sprite would naturally comprise elaborate excuses and apologies, accompanied by loud lamentations at his decease whenever, through some deplorable accident or necessity, he happened to be murdered as well as robbed. Only we must bear in mind that the savage hunter and herdsman of those early days had probably not yet attained to the abstract idea of vegetation in general; and that accordingly, so far as Adonis existed for them at all, he must have been the *Adon* or lord of each individual tree and plant rather than a personification of vegetable life as a whole. Thus there would be as many Adonises as there were trees and shrubs, and each of them might expect to receive satisfaction for any damage done to his person or property. And year by year, when the trees were deciduous, every Adonis would seem to bleed to death with the red leaves of autumn and to come to life again with the fresh green of spring.

We have seen reason to think that in early times Adonis was sometimes personated by a living man who died a violent death in the character of the god. Further, there is evidence which goes to show that among the

But  
probably  
Adonis  
was a spirit  
of fruits,  
edible  
roots, and  
grass  
before he  
became  
a spirit  
of the  
cultivated  
corn.

The propitiation of the corn-spirit may have fused with the worship of the dead.

agricultural peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean, the corn-spirit, by whatever name he was known, was often represented, year by year, by human victims slain on the harvest-field.<sup>1</sup> If that was so, it seems likely that the propitiation of the corn-spirit would tend to fuse to some extent with the worship of the dead. For the spirits of these victims might be thought to return to life in the ears which they had fattened with their blood, and to die a second death at the reaping of the corn. Now the ghosts of those who have perished by violence are surly and apt to wreak their vengeance on their slayers whenever an opportunity offers. Hence the attempt to appease the souls of the slaughtered victims would naturally blend, at least in the popular conception, with the attempt to pacify the slain corn-spirit. And as the dead came back in the sprouting corn, so they might be thought to return in the spring flowers, waked from their long sleep by the soft vernal airs. They had been laid to their rest under the sod. What more natural than to imagine that the violets and the hyacinths, the roses and the anemones, sprang from their dust, were empurpled or incarnadined by their blood, and contained some portion of their spirit?

*I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;  
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears  
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.*

*And this reviving Herb whose tender Green  
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—  
Ah, lean upon it lightly, for who knows  
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen?*

The festival of the dead a festival of flowers.

At Athens the great Commemoration of the Dead fell in spring about the middle of March, when the early flowers are in bloom. Then the dead were believed to rise from their graves and go about the streets, vainly endeavouring to enter the temples and the dwellings, which were barred against these perturbed spirits with ropes, buckthorn, and pitch. The name of the festival, according to the most

<sup>1</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Mythologische Forschungen*, pp. 1 sqq.; *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 224 sqq.



obvious and natural interpretation, means the Festival of Flowers, and the title would fit well with the substance of the ceremonies if at that season the poor ghosts were indeed thought to creep from the narrow house with the opening flowers.<sup>1</sup> There may therefore be a measure of truth in the theory of Renan, who saw in the Adonis worship a dreamy voluptuous cult of death, conceived not as the King of Terrors, but as an insidious enchanter who lures his victims to himself and lulls them into an eternal sleep. The infinite charm of nature in the Lebanon, he thought, lends itself to religious emotions of this sensuous, visionary sort, hovering vaguely between pain and pleasure, between slumber and tears.<sup>2</sup> It would doubtless be a mistake to attribute to Syrian peasants the worship of a conception so purely abstract as that of death in general. Yet it may be true that in their simple minds the thought of the reviving spirit of vegetation was blent with the very concrete notion of the ghosts of the dead, who come to life again in spring days with the early flowers, with the tender green of the corn and the many-tinted blossoms of the trees. Thus their views of the death and resurrection of nature would be coloured by their views of the death and resurrection of man, by their personal sorrows and hopes and fears. In like manner we cannot doubt that Renan's theory of Adonis was itself deeply tinged by passionate memories, memories of the slumber akin to death which sealed his own eyes on the slopes of the Lebanon, memories of the sister who sleeps in the land of Adonis never again to wake with the anemones and the roses.

<sup>1</sup> This explanation of the name *Antheateria*, as applied to a festival of the dead, is due to Mr. R. Wiensch (*Das Frühlingsfest der Insel Malta*, Leipzig, 1902, pp. 43 sqq.). I cannot accept my friend Dr. A. W. Verrall's ingenious derivation of the word from a verb ἀνθεράσσειν in the sense of

"to conjure up" (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xx. (1900) pp. 115-117). As to the festival see E. Rohde, *Psyche*,<sup>3</sup> i. 236 sqq.; Miss J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 32 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie* (Paris, 1864), p. 216.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GARDENS OF ADONIS

Pots of  
corn, herbs,  
and  
flowers,  
called the  
gardens  
of Adonis.

PERHAPS the best proof that Adonis was a deity of vegetation, and especially of the corn, is furnished by the gardens of Adonis, as they were called. These were baskets or pots filled with earth, in which wheat, barley, lettuces, fennel, and various kinds of flowers were sown and tended for eight days, chiefly or exclusively by women. Fostered by the sun's heat, the plants shot up rapidly, but having no root they withered as rapidly away, and at the end of eight days were carried out with the images of the dead Adonis, and flung with them into the sea or into springs.<sup>1</sup>

These  
gardens  
of Adonis  
were  
charms to  
promote  
the growth  
of  
vegetation.

These gardens of Adonis are most naturally interpreted as representatives of Adonis or manifestations of his power; they represented him, true to his original nature, in vegetable form, while the images of him, with which they were carried out and cast into the water, portrayed him in his later human form. All these Adonis ceremonies, if I am right, were originally intended as charms to promote the growth or revival of vegetation; and the principle by which they

<sup>1</sup> For the authorities see Raoul Rochette, "Mémoire sur les jardins d'Adonis," *Revue Archéologique*, viii. (1851) pp. 97-123; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 279, note 2, and p. 280, note 2. To the authorities cited by Mannhardt add Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.* vi. 7. 3; *id.*, *De Causis Plant.* i. 12. 2; Gregorius Cyprius, i. 7; Macarius, i. 63; Apostolius, i. 34; Diogenianus, i. 14; Plutarch, *De sera num. vind.* 17. Women only are mentioned as planting

the gardens of Adonis by Plutarch, *l.c.*; Julian, *Convivium*, p. 329 ed. Spanheim (p. 423 ed. Hertlein); Eustathius on Homer, *Od.* xi. 590. On the other hand, Apostolius and Diogenianus (*l.c.*) say *φύτεύοντες* & *φύτεύονσαι*. The procession at the festival of Adonis is mentioned in an Attic inscription of 302 or 301 B.C. (Dittenberger, *Syllage Inscriptionum Græcarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 726). Gardens of Adonis are perhaps alluded to by Isaiah (xvii. 10, with the commentators).



were supposed to produce this effect was homoeopathic or imitative magic. For ignorant people suppose that by mimicking the effect which they desire to produce they actually help to produce it; thus by sprinkling water they make rain, by lighting a fire they make sunshine, and so on. Similarly, by mimicking the growth of crops they hope to ensure a good harvest. The rapid growth of the wheat and barley in the gardens of Adonis was intended to make the corn shoot up; and the throwing of the gardens and of the images into the water was a charm to secure a due supply of fertilising rain.<sup>1</sup> The same, I take it, was the object of throwing the effigies of Death and the Carnival into water in the corresponding ceremonies of modern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the custom of drenching with water a leaf-clad person, who undoubtedly personifies vegetation, is still resorted to in Europe for the express purpose of producing rain.<sup>3</sup> Similarly the custom of throwing water on the last corn cut at harvest, or on the person who brings it home (a custom observed in Germany and France, and till quite lately in England and Scotland), is in some places practised with the avowed intent to procure rain for the next year's crops. Thus in Wallachia and amongst the Roumanians of Transylvania, when a girl is bringing home a crown made of the last ears of corn cut at harvest, all who meet her hasten to throw water on her, and two farm-servants are placed at the door for the purpose; for they believe that if this were not done, the crops next year would perish from drought.<sup>4</sup> So

The throwing of the "gardens" into water was a rain-charm.

Parallel European customs of drenching the corn with water at harvest or sowing.

<sup>1</sup> In hot southern countries like Egypt and the Semitic regions of Western Asia, where vegetation depends chiefly or entirely upon irrigation, the purpose of the charm is doubtless to secure a plentiful flow of water in the streams. But as the ultimate object and the charms for securing it are the same in both cases, I have not thought it necessary always to point out the distinction.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 78 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 94 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 214; W. Schmidt, *Das Jahr und seine Tage in Meinung und Brauch der Rumänen Siebenbürgens*, pp. 18 sq. The custom of throwing water on the last

waggon-load of corn returning from the harvest-field has been practised within living memory in Wigtownshire, and at Orwell in Cambridgeshire. See *Folklore Journal*, vii. (1889) pp. 50, 51. (In the first of these passages the Orwell at which the custom used to be observed is said to be in Kent; this was a mistake of mine, which my informant, the Rev. E. B. Birks, formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, afterwards corrected.) Mr. R. F. Davis writes to me (March 4, 1906) from Campbell College, Belfast: "Between 30 and 40 years ago I was staying, as a very small boy, at a Nottinghamshire farmhouse at harvest-time, and was allowed—as a great privilege—to ride

Use of  
water as a  
rain-charm  
at harvest  
and  
sowing.

amongst the Saxons of Transylvania, the person who wears the wreath made of the last corn cut is drenched with water to the skin; for the wetter he is, the better will be next year's harvest, and the more grain there will be threshed out. Sometimes the wearer of the wreath is the reaper who cut the last corn.<sup>1</sup> In Northern Euboea, when the corn-sheaves have been piled in a stack, the farmer's wife brings a pitcher of water and offers it to each of the labourers that he may wash his hands. Every man, after he has washed his hands, sprinkles water on the corn and on the threshing-floor, expressing at the same time a wish that the corn may last long. Lastly, the farmer's wife holds the pitcher slantingly and runs at full speed round the stack without spilling a drop, while she utters a wish that the stack may endure as long as the circle she has just described.<sup>2</sup> At the spring ploughing in Prussia, when the ploughmen and sowers returned in the evening from their work in the fields, the farmer's wife and the servants used to splash water over them. The ploughmen and sowers retorted by seizing every one, throwing them into the pond, and ducking them under the water. The farmer's wife might claim exemption on payment of a forfeit, but every one else had to be ducked. By observing this custom they hoped to ensure a due supply of rain for the seed.<sup>3</sup> Also after harvest in Prussia, the person who wore a wreath made of the last corn cut was drenched with water, while a prayer was uttered that "as the corn had sprung up and multiplied through the water, so it might spring up and multiply in the barn and granary."<sup>4</sup> At Schlanow, in Brandenburg, when the sowers return home from the first sowing they are drenched with water "in order that the corn may grow."<sup>5</sup> In

home on the top of the last load. All the harvesters followed the waggon, and on reaching the farmyard we found the maids of the farm gathered near the gate, with bowls and buckets of water, which they proceeded to throw on the men, who got thoroughly drenched."

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Heinrich, *Agrarische Sitten und Gebräuche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens* (Hermanstadt, 1880), p. 24; H. von Wilslockt, *Sitten und*

*Brauch der Siebenbürger Sachsen* (Hamburg, 1888), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> G. Drosinis, *Land und Leute in Nord-Euböa* (Leipzig, 1884), p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Matthäus Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussicae*, p. 55; W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, pp. 214 sq., note.

<sup>4</sup> M. Praetorius, *op. cit.* p. 60; W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 215, note.

<sup>5</sup> H. Prahm, "Glaube und Brauch in der Mark Brandenburg," *Zeitschrift*



Anhalt on the same occasion the farmer is still often sprinkled with water by his family; and his men and horses, and even the plough, receive the same treatment. The object of the custom, as people at Arensdorf explained it, is "to wish fertility to the fields for the whole year."<sup>1</sup> So in Hesse, when the ploughmen return with the plough from the field for the first time, the women and girls lie in wait for them and slyly drench them with water.<sup>2</sup> Near Naaburg, in Bavaria, the man who first comes back from sowing or ploughing has a vessel of water thrown over him by some one in hiding.<sup>3</sup> At Hettingen in Baden the farmer who is about to begin the sowing of oats is sprinkled with water, in order that the oats may not shrivel up.<sup>4</sup> Before the Tusayan Indians of North America go out to plant their fields, the women sometimes pour water on them; the reason for doing so is that "as the water is poured on the men, so may water fall on the planted fields."<sup>5</sup> The Indians of Santiago Tepehuacan steep the seed of the maize in water before they sow it, in order that the god of the waters may bestow on the fields the needed moisture.<sup>6</sup>

The opinion that the gardens of Adonis are essentially charms to promote the growth of vegetation, especially of the crops, and that they belong to the same class of customs as those spring and midsummer folk-customs of modern Europe which I have described elsewhere,<sup>7</sup> does not rest for its evidence merely on the intrinsic probability of the case. Fortunately we are able to show that gardens of Adonis (if we may use the expression in a general sense) are still planted, first, by a primitive race at their sowing season, and, second, by European peasants at midsummer. Amongst the Oraons and Mundas of Bengal, when the time comes for planting out the rice which has been grown in seed-beds, a

Gardens of Adonis among the Oraons and Mundas of Bengal.

*des Vereins für Volkskunde*, i. (1891) p. 186.

<sup>1</sup> O. Hartung, "Zur Volkskunde aus Anhalt," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, vii. (1897) p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> W. Kolbe, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche*, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Bavaria, *Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, ii. 297.

<sup>4</sup> E. H. Meyer, *Badisches Volksleben* (Strasburg, 1900), p. 420.

<sup>5</sup> J. Walter Fewkes, "The Tusayan New Fire Ceremony," *Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History*, xxvi. (1893) p. 446.

<sup>6</sup> "Lettre du curé de Santiago Tepehuacan à son évêque," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), Deuxième Série, ii. (1834) pp. 181-19.

<sup>7</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>1</sup> i. 190, 193-199.

Gardens of  
Adonis  
among the  
Orons and  
Mundas of  
Bengal.

party of young people of both sexes go to the forest and cut a young Karma-tree, or the branch of one. Bearing it in triumph they return dancing, singing, and beating drums, and plant it in the middle of the village dancing-ground. A sacrifice is offered to the tree; and next morning the youth of both sexes, linked arm-in-arm, dance in a great circle round the Karma-tree, which is decked with strips of coloured cloth and sham bracelets and necklets of plaited straw. As a preparation for the festival, the daughters of the headman of the village cultivate blades of barley in a peculiar way. The seed is sown in moist, sandy soil, mixed with turmeric, and the blades sprout and unfold of a pale yellow or primrose colour. On the day of the festival the girls take up these blades and carry them in baskets to the dancing-ground, where, prostrating themselves reverentially, they place some of the plants before the Karma-tree. Finally, the Karma-tree is taken away and thrown into a stream or tank.<sup>1</sup> The meaning of planting these barley blades and then presenting them to the Karma-tree is hardly open to question. Trees are supposed to exercise a quickening influence upon the growth of crops, and amongst the very people in question—the Mundas or Mundaris—"the grove deities are held responsible for the crops."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, when at the season for planting out the rice the Mundas bring in a tree and treat it with so much respect, their object can only be to foster thereby the growth of the rice which is about to be planted out; and the custom of causing barley blades to sprout rapidly and then presenting them to the tree must be intended to subserve the same purpose, perhaps by reminding the tree-spirit of his duty towards the crops, and stimulating his activity by this visible example of rapid vegetable growth. The throwing of the Karma-tree into the water is to be interpreted as a rain-charm. Whether the barley blades are also thrown into the water is not said; but if my interpretation of the custom is right, probably they are so. A distinction between this Bengal custom and the Greek rites of Adonis is that in the former the tree-spirit appears in his original form as a tree;

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 189 199.



whereas in the Adonis worship he appears in human form, represented as a dead man, though his vegetable nature is indicated by the gardens of Adonis, which are, so to say, a secondary manifestation of his original power as a tree-spirit.

Gardens of Adonis are cultivated also by the Hindoos, Gardens of Adonis in Rajputana. with the intention apparently of ensuring the fertility both of the earth and of mankind. Thus at Oodeypoor in Rajputana a festival is held "in honour of Gouri, or Isani, the goddess of abundance, the Isis of Egypt, the Ceres of Greece. Like the Rajpoot Saturnalia, which it follows, it belongs to the vernal equinox, when nature in these regions proximate to the tropic is in the full expanse of her charms, and the matronly Gouri casts her golden mantle over the verdant Vassanti, personification of spring. Then the fruits exhibit their promise to the eye; the kohil fills the ear with melody; the air is impregnated with aroma, and the crimson poppy contrasts with the spikes of golden grain to form a wreath for the beneficent Gouri. Gouri is one of the names of Isa or Parvati, wife of the greatest of the gods, Mahadeva or Iswara, who is conjoined with her in these rites, which almost exclusively appertain to the women. The meaning of *gouri* is 'yellow,' emblematic of the ripened harvest, when the votaries of the goddess adore her effigies, which are those of a matron painted the colour of ripe corn." The rites begin when the sun enters the sign of the Ram, the opening of the Hindoo year. An image of the goddess Gouri is made of earth, and a smaller one of her husband Iswara, and the two are placed together. A small trench is next dug, barley is sown in it, and the ground watered and heated artificially till the grain sprouts, when the women dance round it hand in hand, invoking the blessing of Gouri on their husbands. After that the young corn is taken up and distributed by the women to the men, who wear it in their turbans. Every wealthy family, or at least every subdivision of the city, has its own image. These and other rites, known only to the initiated, occupy several days, and are performed within doors. Then the images of the goddess and her husband are decorated and borne in procession to a beautiful lake, whose deep blue waters mirror the cloudless Indian sky, marble palaces, and orange groves.

Here the women, their hair decked with roses and jessamine, carry the image of Gouri down a marble staircase to the water's edge, and dance round it singing hymns and love-songs. Meantime the goddess is supposed to bathe in the water. No men take part in the ceremony; even the image of Iswara, the husband-god, attracts little attention.<sup>1</sup> In these rites the distribution of the barley shoots to the men, and the invocation of a blessing on their husbands by the wives, point clearly to the desire of offspring as one motive for observing the custom. The same motive probably explains the use of gardens of Adonis at the marriage of Brahmans in the Madras Presidency. Seeds of five or nine sorts are mixed and sown in earthen pots, which are made specially for the purpose and are filled with earth. Bride and bridegroom water the seeds both morning and evening for four days; and on the fifth day the seedlings are thrown, like the real gardens of Adonis, into a tank or river.<sup>2</sup>

Gardens of  
Adonis in  
North-  
western and  
Central  
India.

In the Himalayan districts of North-western India the cultivators sow barley, maize, pulse, or mustard in a basket of earth on the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month (*Asārā*), which falls about the middle of July. Then on the last day of the month they place amidst the new sprouts small clay images of Mahadeo and Parvati and worship them in remembrance of the marriage of those deities. Next day they cut down the green stalks and wear them in their head-dress.<sup>3</sup> Similar is the barley feast known as *Jāyī* or *Jawāra* in Upper India and as *Bhujariya* in the Central Provinces. On the seventh day of the light half of the month *Sāwan* grains of barley are sown in a pot of manure, and spring up so quickly that by the end of the month the vessel is full of long, yellowish-green stalks. On the first day of the next month, *Bhādon*, the women and girls take the stalks out, throw the earth and manure into water, and distribute the plants among their male friends, who bind them in their turbans and about their dress.<sup>4</sup> At

<sup>1</sup> Lieut.-Col. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, i. (London, 1829) pp. 570-572.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, xxv. (1896) p. 144; E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* (Madras,

1906), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> E. T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Districts of the North-Western Provinces of India*, ii. (Allahabad, 1884) p. 870.

<sup>4</sup> W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (West-



Sargal in the Central Provinces of India this ceremony is observed about the middle of September. None but women may take part in it, though crowds of men come to look on. Some little time before the festival wheat or other grain has been sown in pots ingeniously constructed of large leaves, which are held together by the thorns of a species of acacia. Having grown up in the dark, the stalks are of a pale colour. On the day appointed these gardens of Adonis, as we may call them, are carried towards a lake which abuts on the native city. The women of every family or circle of friends bring their own pots, and having laid them on the ground they dance round them. Then taking the pots of sprouting corn they descend to the edge of the water, wash the soil away from the pots, and distribute the young plants among their friends.<sup>1</sup> At the temple of the goddess Padmavati, near Pandharpur in the Bombay Presidency, a Nine Nights' festival is held in the bright half of the month Ashvin (September–October). At this time a bamboo frame is hung in front of the image, and from it depend garlands of flowers and strings of wheaten cakes. Under the frame the floor in front of the pedestal is strewn with a layer of earth in which wheat is sown and allowed to sprout.<sup>2</sup> A similar rite is observed in the same month before the images of two other goddesses, Ambabai and Lakhubai, who also have temples at Pandharpur.<sup>3</sup>

In some parts of Bavaria it is customary to sow flax in a pot on the last three days of the Carnival; from the seed which grows best an omen is drawn as to whether the early, the middle, or the late sowing will produce the best crop.<sup>4</sup> In Sardinia the gardens of Adonis are still planted

Gardens of  
Adonis in  
Bavaria.

minster, 1896), ii. 293 *sq.* Compare Baboo Ishuree Dass, *Domestic Manners and Customs of the Hindus of Northern India* (Benares, 1860), pp. 111 *sq.* According to the latter writer, the festival of Salono [not Saloman] takes place in August, and the barley is planted by women and girls in baskets a few days before the festival, to be thrown by them into a river or tank when the grain has sprouted to the height of a few inches.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. J. C. Murray-Aynsley,

"Secular and Religious Dances," *Folklore Journal*, v. (1887) pp. 253 *sq.* The writer thinks that the ceremony "probably fixes the season for sowing some particular crop."

<sup>2</sup> *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, xx. (Bombay, 1884) p. 454. This passage was pointed out to me by my friend Mr. W. Crooke.

<sup>3</sup> *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, xx. 443, 460.

<sup>4</sup> *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, ii. 298.

Gardens of  
Adonis on  
St. John's  
Day in  
Sardinia.

in connection with the great Midsummer festival which bears the name of St. John. At the end of March or on the first of April a young man of the village presents himself to a girl and asks her to be his *comare* (gossip or sweetheart), offering to be her *compare*. The invitation is considered as an honour by the girl's family, and is gladly accepted. At the end of May the girl makes a pot of the bark of the cork-tree, fills it with earth, and sows a handful of wheat and barley in it. The pot being placed in the sun and often watered, the corn sprouts rapidly and has a good head by Midsummer Eve (St. John's Eve, the twenty-third of June). The pot is then called *Erme* or *Nenneri*. On St. John's Day the young man and the girl, dressed in their best, accompanied by a long retinue and preceded by children gambolling and frolicking, move in procession to a church outside the village. Here they break the pot by throwing it against the door of the church. Then they sit down in a ring on the grass and eat eggs and herbs to the music of flutes. Wine is mixed in a cup and passed round, each one drinking as it passes. Then they join hands and sing "Sweethearts of St. John" (*Compare e comare di San Giovanni*) over and over again, the flutes playing the while. When they tire of singing they stand up and dance gaily in a ring till evening. This is the general Sardinian custom. As practised at Ozieri it has some special features. In May the pots are made of cork-bark and planted with corn, as already described. Then on the Eve of St. John the window-sills are draped with rich cloths, on which the pots are placed, adorned with crimson and blue silk and ribbons of various colours. On each of the pots they used formerly to place a statuette or cloth doll dressed as a woman, or a Priapus-like figure made of paste; but this custom, rigorously forbidden by the Church, has fallen into disuse. The village swains go about in a troop to look at the pots and their decorations and to wait for the girls, who assemble on the public square to celebrate the festival. Here a great bonfire is kindled, round which they dance and make merry. Those who wish to be "Sweethearts of St. John" act as follows. The young man stands on one side of the bonfire and the girl on the other, and they, in a manner, join hands by each grasping



one end of a long stick, which they pass three times backwards and forwards across the fire, thus thrusting their hands thrice rapidly into the flames. This seals their relationship to each other. Dancing and music go on till late at night.<sup>1</sup> The correspondence of these Sardinian pots of grain to the gardens of Adonis seems complete, and the images formerly placed in them answer to the images of Adonis which accompanied his gardens.

Customs of the same sort are observed at the same season in Sicily. Pairs of boys and girls become gossips of St. John on St. John's Day by drawing each a hair from his or her head and performing various ceremonies over them. Thus they tie the hairs together and throw them up in the air, or exchange them over a potsherd, which they afterwards break in two, preserving each a fragment with pious care. The tie formed in the latter way is supposed to last for life. In some parts of Sicily the gossips of St. John present each other with plates of sprouting corn, lentils, and canary seed, which have been planted forty days before the festival. The one who receives the plate pulls a stalk of the young plants, binds it with a ribbon, and preserves it among his or her greatest treasures, restoring the platter to the giver. At Catania the gossips exchange pots of basil and great cucumbers; the girls tend the basil, and the thicker it grows the more it is prized.<sup>2</sup>

In these midsummer customs of Sardinia and Sicily it is possible that, as Mr. R. Wunsch supposes,<sup>3</sup> St. John has replaced Adonis. We have seen that the rites of Tammuz or Adonis were commonly celebrated about midsummer; according to Jerome, their date was June.<sup>4</sup> And

Gardens of Adonis on St. John's Day in Sicily.

In these Sardinian and Sicilian ceremonies St. John may have taken the place of Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> Antonio Bresciani, *Dei costumi dell' isola di Sardegna comparati cogli antichissimi popoli orientali* (Rome and Turin, 1866), pp. 427 sq.; R. Tennant, *Sardinia and its Resources* (Rome and London, 1885), p. 187; S. Gabriele, "Usi dei contadini della Sardegna," *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari*, vii. (1888) pp. 469 sq. Tennant says that the pots are kept in a dark warm place, and that the children leap across the fire.

<sup>2</sup> G. Pitté, *Usi e Costumi, Credenze*

e Pregiudizi del popolo siciliano, ii. 271-278. Compare *id.*, *Spettacoli e feste popolari siciliane*, pp. 297 sq. In the Abruzzi also young men and young women become gossips by exchanging nosegays on St. John's Day, and the tie thus formed is regarded as sacred. See G. Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, pp. 165 sq.

<sup>3</sup> R. Wunsch, *Das Frühlingsfest der Insel Malta*, pp. 47-57.

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 7, 183, 185, 190, note 2.

besides their date and their similarity in respect of the pots of herbs and corn, there is another point of affinity between the two festivals, the heathen and the Christian. In both of them water plays a prominent part. At his midsummer festival in Babylon the image of Tammuz, whose name is said to mean "true son of the deep water," was bathed with pure water: at his summer festival in Alexandria the image of Adonis, with that of his divine mistress Aphrodite, was committed to the waves; and at the midsummer celebration in Greece the gardens of Adonis were thrown into the sea or into springs. Now a great feature of the midsummer festival associated with the name of St. John is, or used to be, the custom of bathing in the sea, springs, rivers, or the dew on Midsummer Eve or the morning of Midsummer Day. Thus, for example, at Naples there is a church dedicated to St. John the Baptist under the name of St. John of the Sea (*S. Giovan a mare*); and it was an old practice for men and women to bathe in the sea on St. John's Eve, that is, on Midsummer Eve, believing that thus all their sins were washed away.<sup>1</sup> In the Abruzzi water is still supposed to acquire certain marvellous and beneficent properties on St. John's Night. They say that on that night the sun and moon bathe in the water. Hence many people take a bath in the sea or in a river at that season, especially at the moment of sunrise. At Castiglione a Casauria they go before sunrise to the Pescara River or to springs, wash their faces and hands, then gird themselves with twigs of bryony (*vitalba*) and twine the plant round their brows, in order that they may be free from pains. At Pescina boys and girls wash each other's faces in a river or a spring, then exchange kisses, and become gossips. The dew, also, that falls on St. John's Night is supposed in the Abruzzi to benefit whatever it touches, whether it be water, flowers, or the human body. For that reason people put out vessels of water on the window-sills or the terraces, and wash themselves with the water in the morning in order to purify themselves and escape headaches and colds. A still more efficacious mode of accomplishing the same end is to rise at the peep of dawn, to wet the hands in the dewy grass, and

<sup>1</sup> J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> i. 490.

Custom of  
bathing in  
water or  
washing in  
dew on  
the Eve or  
Day of St.  
John (Mid-  
summer  
Eve or Mid-  
summer  
Day).



then to rub the moisture on the eyelids, the brow, and the temples, because the dew is believed to cure maladies of the head and eyes. It is also a remedy for diseases of the skin. Persons who are thus afflicted should roll on the dewy grass. When patients are prevented by their infirmity or any other cause from quitting the house, their friends will gather the dew in sheets or tablecloths and so apply it to the suffering part.<sup>1</sup> At Marsala in Sicily there is a spring of water in a subterranean grotto called the Grotto of the Sibyl. Beside it stands a church of St. John, which has been supposed to occupy the site of a temple of Apollo. On St. John's Eve, the twenty-third of June, women and girls visit the grotto, and by drinking of the prophetic water learn whether their husbands have been faithful to them in the year that is past, or whether they themselves will wed in the year that is to come. Sick people, too, imagine that by bathing in the water, drinking of it, or ducking thrice in it in the name of the Trinity, they will be made whole.<sup>2</sup> At Chiaramonte in Sicily the following custom is observed on St. John's Eve. The men repair to one fountain and the women to another, and dip their heads thrice in the water, repeating at each ablution certain verses in honour of St. John. They believe that this is a cure or preventive of the scald.<sup>3</sup> When Petrarch visited Cologne, he chanced to arrive in the town on St. John's Eve. The sun was nearly setting, and his host at once led him to the Rhine. A strange sight there met his eyes, for the banks of the river were covered with pretty women. The crowd was great but good-humoured. From a rising ground on which he stood the poet saw many of the women, girt with fragrant herbs, kneel down on the water's edge, roll their sleeves up above their elbows, and wash their white arms and hands

<sup>1</sup> G. Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, pp. 156-160. A passage in Isaiah (xxvi. 19) seems to imply that dew possessed the magical virtue of restoring the dead to life. In this passage of Isaiah the customs which I have cited in the text perhaps favour the ordinary interpretation of *rosa h'as* as "dew of herbs" (compare 2 Kings iv. 39) against the interpretation

"dew of lights," which some modern commentators (Dillmann, Skinner, Whitehouse), following Jerome, have adopted.

<sup>2</sup> G. Pitrè, *Feste patronali in Sicilia* (Turin and Palermo, 1900), pp. 488, 491-493.

<sup>3</sup> G. Pitrè, *Spettacoli e feste popolari siciliane*, p. 307.

in the river, murmuring softly some words which the Italian did not understand. He was told that the custom was a very old one, much honoured in the observance; for the common folk, especially the women, believed that to wash in the river on St. John's Eve would avert every misfortune in the coming year.<sup>1</sup> On St. John's Eve the people of Copenhagen used to go on pilgrimage to a neighbouring spring, there to heal and strengthen themselves in the water.<sup>2</sup> In Spain people still bathe in the sea or roll naked in the dew of the meadows on St. John's Eve, believing that this is a sovereign preservative against diseases of the skin.<sup>3</sup> To roll in the dew on the morning of St. John's Day is also esteemed a cure for diseases of the skin in Normandy and Perigord. In Perigord a field of hemp is especially recommended for the purpose, and the patient should rub himself with the plants on which he has rolled.<sup>4</sup> At Ciotat in Provence, while the midsummer bonfire blazed, young people used to plunge into the sea and splash each other vigorously. At Vitrolles they bathed in a pond in order that they might not suffer from fever during the year, and at Saint-Maries they watered the horses to protect them from the itch.<sup>5</sup> A custom of drenching people on this occasion with water formerly prevailed in Toulon, Marseilles, and other towns of the south of France. The water was squirted from syringes, poured on the heads of passers-by from windows, and so forth.<sup>6</sup> From Europe the practice of bathing in rivers and springs on St. John's Day appears to have passed with the Spaniards to the New World.<sup>7</sup>

It may perhaps be suggested that this wide-spread custom of bathing in water or dew on Midsummer Eve or Midsummer Day is purely Christian in origin, having been adopted as an appropriate mode of celebrating the day

The custom of bathing at midsummer is pagan, not Christian, in its origin.

<sup>1</sup> Petrarch, *Epistolæ de rebus familiaribus*, i. 4 (vol. i. pp. 44-46 ed. J. Fraucassetti). The passage is quoted by J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> i. 489 sq.

<sup>2</sup> J. Grimm, *op. cit.* i. 489.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Dr. Otero Acevado, of Madrid, *Le Temps*, September 1898.

<sup>4</sup> J. Leccœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 8; A. de Nore, *Coutumes, Mythes et Traditions des provinces de*

*France*, p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> A. de Nore, *op. cit.* p. 20; Béranger-Féraud, *Reminiscences populaires de la Provence*, pp. 135-141.

<sup>6</sup> Breuil, in *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie*, viii. (1845) pp. 237 sq.

<sup>7</sup> Diego Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*, edited by J. F. Ramirez (Mexico, 1867-1880), ii. 293.



dedicated to the Baptist. But in point of fact the custom is older than Christianity, for it was denounced and forbidden as a heathen practice by Augustine.<sup>1</sup> We may conjecture that the Church, unable to put down this relic of paganism, followed its usual policy of accommodation by bestowing on the rite a Christian name and acquiescing, with a sigh, in its observance. And casting about for a saint to supplant a heathen patron of bathing, the Christian doctors could hardly have hit upon a more appropriate successor than St. John the Baptist.

But into whose shoes did the Baptist step? Was the displaced deity really Adonis, as the foregoing evidence seems to suggest? In Sardinia and Sicily it may have been so, for in these islands Semitic influence was certainly deep and probably lasting. The midsummer pastimes of Sardinian and Sicilian children may therefore be a direct continuation of the Carthaginian rites of Tammuz. Yet the midsummer festival seems too widely spread and too deeply rooted in Central and Northern Europe to allow us to trace it everywhere to an Oriental origin in general and to the cult of Adonis in particular. It has the air of a native of the soil rather than of an exotic imported from the East. We shall do better, therefore, to suppose that at a remote period similar modes of thought, based on similar needs, led men independently in many distant lands, from the North Sea to the Euphrates, to celebrate the summer solstice with rites which, while they differed in some things, yet agreed closely in others; that in historical times a wave of Oriental influence, starting perhaps from Babylonia, carried the Tammuz or Adonis form of the festival westward till it met with native forms of a similar festival; and that under pressure of the Roman civilisation these different yet kindred festivals fused with each other and crystallised into a variety of shapes, which subsisted more or less separately side by side, till the Church, unable to suppress them altogether, stripped them so far as it could of their grosser features, and dexterously changing the names allowed them to pass

Old  
heathen  
festival  
of mid-  
summer in  
Europe  
and the  
East.

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *Opera*, v. (Paris, 1683) col. 903; *id.*, Pars Secunda, coll. 461 *sq.* The second of these passages

occurs in a sermon of doubtful authenticity. Both have been quoted by J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>1</sup> i. 490.

muster as Christian. And what has just been said of the midsummer festivals probably applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the spring festivals also. They, too, seem to have originated independently in Europe and the East, and after ages of separation to have amalgamated under the sway of the Roman Empire and the Christian Church. In Syria, as we have seen, there appears to have been a vernal celebration of Adonis; and we shall presently meet with an undoubted instance of an Oriental festival of spring in the rites of Attis. Meantime we must return for a little to the midsummer festival which goes by the name of St. John.

Mid-  
summer  
fires and  
mid-  
summer  
couples in  
relation to  
vegetation.

The Sardinian practice of making merry round a great bonfire on St. John's Eve is an instance of a custom which has been practised at the midsummer festival from time immemorial in many parts of Europe. That custom has been more fully dealt with by me elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The instances which I have there cited suffice to prove the connection of the midsummer bonfire with vegetation. For example, both in Sweden and Bohemia an essential part of the festival is the raising of a May-pole or Midsummer-tree, which in Bohemia is burned in the bonfire.<sup>2</sup> Again, in a Russian midsummer ceremony a straw figure of Kupalo, the representative of vegetation, is placed beside a May-pole or Midsummer-tree and then carried to and fro across a bonfire.<sup>3</sup> Kupalo is here represented in duplicate, in tree-form by the Midsummer-tree, and in human form by the straw effigy, just as Adonis was represented both by an image and a garden of Adonis; and the duplicate representatives of Kupalo, like those of Adonis, are finally cast into water. In the Sardinian and Sicilian customs the Gossips or Sweethearts of St. John probably answer, on the one hand to Adonis and Astarte, on the other to the King and Queen of May. In the Swedish province of Blekinge part of the midsummer festival is the election of a Midsummer Bride, who chooses her bridegroom; a collection is made for the pair, who for the time being are looked upon as man and wife.<sup>4</sup> Such Midsummer pairs may be supposed, like the May pairs, to stand for the powers of

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 266 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 202 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 105.

<sup>4</sup> L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden*, p. 257.



vegetation or of fertility in general: they represent in flesh and blood what the images of Siva or Mahadeo and Pārvati in the Indian ceremonies, and the images of Adonis and Aphrodite in the Alexandrian ceremony, set forth in effigy.

The reason why ceremonies whose aim is to foster the growth of vegetation should thus be associated with bonfires; why in particular the representative of vegetation should be burned in the likeness of a tree, or passed across the fire in effigy or in the form of a living couple, must be reserved for discussion in another work.<sup>1</sup> Here it is enough to have proved the fact of such association, and therefore to have obviated the objection which might have been raised to my theory of the Sardinian custom, on the ground that the bonfires have nothing to do with vegetation. One more piece of evidence may here be given to prove the contrary. In some parts of Germany young men and girls leap over midsummer bonfires for the express purpose of making the hemp or flax grow tall.<sup>2</sup> We may, therefore, assume that in the Sardinian custom the blades of wheat and barley which are forced on in pots for the midsummer festival, and which correspond so closely to the gardens of Adonis, form one of those widely-spread midsummer ceremonies, the original object of which was to promote the growth of vegetation, and especially of the crops. But as, by an easy extension of ideas, the spirit of vegetation was believed to exercise a beneficent and fertilising influence on human as well as animal life, the gardens of Adonis would be supposed, like the May-trees or May-boughs,

Gardens of Adonis intended to foster the growth of vegetation, and especially of the crops.

<sup>1</sup> In the meanwhile I may refer to *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 300 *sqq.*, and the criticisms of Dr. E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, i. (London, 1906) p. 56, note 3. In the passage referred to I followed W. Mannhardt in interpreting these bonfires as mainly sun-charms, but I recognised their supposed purgative virtue also, pointing out that "to the primitive mind fire is the most powerful of all purificatory agents" (p. 312). Dr. Westermarck would explain the fires as purificatory only. I am so far

in agreement with him that I believe I overestimated the strength of the evidence for the solar virtue of the fires, and underestimated the strength of the evidence for their purificatory virtue. Meantime I suspend my judgment on the question until I have carefully reconsidered the evidence, as I shall do in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*.

<sup>2</sup> W. Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, p. 464; K. von Leoprechting, *Aus dem Lachrain*, p. 183.

Modes of  
divination  
at mid-  
summer  
like the  
gardens of  
Adonis.

to bring good luck, and more particularly perhaps offspring,<sup>1</sup> to the family or to the person who planted them; and even after the idea had been abandoned that they operated actively to confer prosperity, they might still be used to furnish omens of good or evil. It is thus that magic dwindles into divination. Accordingly we find modes of divination practised at midsummer which resemble more or less closely the gardens of Adonis. Thus an anonymous Italian writer of the sixteenth century has recorded that it was customary to sow barley and wheat a few days before the festival of St. John (Midsummer Day) and also before that of St. Vitus; and it was believed that the person for whom they were sown would be fortunate, and get a good husband or a good wife, if the grain sprouted well; but if it sprouted ill, he or she would be unlucky.<sup>2</sup> In various parts of Italy and all over Sicily it is still customary to put plants in water or in earth on the Eve of St. John, and from the manner in which they are found to be blooming or fading on St. John's Day omens are drawn, especially as to fortune in love. Amongst the plants used for this purpose are *Ciuri di S. Giovanni* (St. John's wort?) and nettles.<sup>3</sup> In Prussia two hundred years ago the farmers used to send out their servants, especially their maids, to gather St. John's wort on Midsummer Eve or Midsummer Day (St. John's Day). When they had fetched it, the farmer took as many plants as there were persons and stuck them in the wall or between the beams; and it was thought that he or she whose plant did not bloom would soon fall sick or die. The rest of the plants were tied in a bundle, fastened to the end of a pole, and set up at the gate or wherever the corn would be brought in at the next harvest. The bundle was called *Kupole*: the ceremony was known as Kupole's festival; and at it the farmer prayed for a good crop of hay, and

<sup>1</sup> The use of gardens of Adonis to fertilise the human sexes appears plainly in the corresponding Indian practices. See above, pp. 199-201.

<sup>2</sup> G. Pitre, *Spettacoli e feste popolari siciliane*, pp. 296 sq.

<sup>3</sup> G. Pitre, *op. cit.* pp. 302 sq.; Antonio de Nino, *Usi Abruzzesi*, i. 55 sq.; A. de Gubernatis, *Usi Nuziali*,

pp. 39 sq. Compare *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari*, i. 135. At Smyrna a blossom of the *Agnus castus* is used on St. John's Day for a similar purpose, but the mode in which the omens are drawn is somewhat different (*Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari*, vii. (1888) pp. 128 sq.).



so forth.<sup>1</sup> This Prussian custom is particularly notable, inasmuch as it strongly confirms the opinion that Kupalo (doubtless identical with Kupole) was originally a deity of vegetation.<sup>2</sup> For here Kupalo is represented by a bundle of plants specially associated with midsummer in folk-custom; and her influence over vegetation is plainly signified by placing her vegetable emblem over the place where the harvest is brought in, as well as by the prayers for a good crop which are uttered on the occasion. This furnishes a fresh argument in support of the view that the Death, whose analogy to Kupalo, Yarilo, and the rest I have shown elsewhere, originally personified vegetation, more especially the dying or dead vegetation of winter.<sup>3</sup> Further, my interpretation of the gardens of Adonis is confirmed by finding that in this Prussian custom the very same kind of plants is used to form the gardens of Adonis (as we may call them) and the image of the deity. Nothing could set in a stronger light the truth of the theory that the gardens of Adonis are merely another manifestation of the god himself.

In Sicily gardens of Adonis are still sown in spring as well as in summer, from which we may perhaps infer that Sicily as well as Syria celebrated of old a vernal festival of the dead and risen god. At the approach of Easter, Sicilian women sow wheat, lentils, and canary-seed in plates, which they keep in the dark and water every two days. The plants soon shoot up; the stalks are tied together with red ribbons, and the plates containing them are placed on the sepulchres which, with the effigies of the dead Christ, are made up in Catholic and Greek churches on Good Friday,<sup>4</sup> just as the gardens of Adonis were placed on the grave of the dead Adonis.<sup>5</sup> The practice is not confined to Sicily, for it is observed also at Cosenza in Calabria,<sup>6</sup> and perhaps in other places. The whole custom—sepulchres as well as plates of sprouting grain—may be nothing but a continuation, under a different name, of the worship of Adonis.

Sicilian  
gardens of  
Adonis in  
spring.

<sup>1</sup> Matthäus Praetorius, *Deliciae Prussicae* (Berlin, 1871), p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 105 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. c.

<sup>4</sup> G. Pittè, *Spectacoli e feste popolari siciliane*, p. 211.

<sup>5</sup> *Κήρυς ὡρίων ἐνταφίον Ἀδωνίδι*, Eastathius on Homer, *Od.* xl. 590.

<sup>6</sup> Vincenzo Dorsa, *La tradizione Greco-Latina negli usi e nelle credenze popolari della Calabria Citeriore* (Cosenza, 1884), p. 50.

Resemblance of the Easter ceremonies in the Greek Church to the rites of Adonis.

Nor are these Sicilian and Calabrian customs the only Easter ceremonies which resemble the rites of Adonis. "During the whole of Good Friday a waxen effigy of the dead Christ is exposed to view in the middle of the Greek churches and is covered with fervent kisses by the thronging crowd, while the whole church rings with melancholy, monotonous dirges. Late in the evening, when it has grown quite dark, this waxen image is carried by the priests into the street on a bier adorned with lemons, roses, and jessamine, and there begins a grand procession of the multitude, who move in serried ranks, with slow and solemn step, through the whole town. Every man carries his taper and breaks out into doleful lamentation. At all the houses which the procession passes there are seated women with censers to fumigate the marching host. Thus the community solemnly buries its Christ as if he had just died. At last the waxen image is again deposited in the church, and the same lugubrious chants echo anew. These lamentations, accompanied by a strict fast, continue till midnight on Saturday. As the clock strikes twelve, the bishop appears and announces the glad tidings that 'Christ is risen,' to which the crowd replies, 'He is risen indeed,' and at once the whole city bursts into an uproar of joy, which finds vent in shrieks and shouts, in the endless discharge of carronades and muskets, and the explosion of fire-works of every sort. In the very same hour people plunge from the extremity of the fast into the enjoyment of the Easter lamb and neat wine."<sup>1</sup>

Resemblance of the Easter ceremonies in the Catholic Church to the rites of Adonis.

In like manner the Catholic Church has been accustomed to bring before its followers in a visible form the death and resurrection of the Redeemer. Such sacred dramas are well fitted to impress the lively imagination and to stir the warm

<sup>1</sup> C. Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im neuen*, pp. 26 sq. The writer compares these ceremonies with the Eleusinian rites. But I agree with Mr. R. Wünsch (*Das Frühlingsfest der Insel Malta*, pp. 49 sq.) that the resemblance to the Adonis festival is still closer. Compare V. Dorsz, *La tradizione Greco-Latina negli usi e nelle credenze popolari della Calabria Citeriore*, pp. 49 sq. Prof. Wachsmuth's

description seems to apply to Athens. In the country districts the ritual is apparently similar. See R. A. Arnold, *From the Levant* (London, 1868), pp. 251 sq., 259 sq. So in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem the death and burial of Christ are acted over a life-like effigy. See H. Maundrell, in Th. Wright's *Early Travels in Palestine* (London, 1848), pp. 443-445.



feelings of a susceptible southern race, to whom the pomp and pageantry of Catholicism are more congenial than to the colder temperament of the Teutonic peoples. The solemnities observed in Sicily on Good Friday, the official anniversary of the Crucifixion, are thus described by a native Sicilian writer. "A truly moving ceremony is the procession which always takes place in the evening in every commune of Sicily, and further the Deposition from the Cross. The brotherhoods took part in the procession, and the rear was brought up by a great many boys and girls representing saints, both male and female, and carrying the emblems of Christ's Passion. The Deposition from the Cross was managed by the priests. The coffin with the dead Christ in it was flanked by Jews armed with swords, an object of horror and aversion in the midst of the profound pity excited by the sight not only of Christ but of the Mater Dolorosa, who followed behind him. Now and then the 'mysteries' or symbols of the Crucifixion went in front. Sometimes the procession followed the 'three hours of agony' and the 'Deposition from the Cross.' The 'three hours' commemorated those which Jesus Christ passed upon the Cross. Beginning at the eighteenth and ending at the twenty-first hour of Italian time two priests preached alternately on the Passion. Anciently the sermons were delivered in the open air on the place called the Calvary: at last, when the third hour was about to strike, at the words *emisit spiritum* Christ died, bowing his head amid the sobs and tears of the bystanders. Immediately afterwards in some places, three hours afterwards in others, the sacred body was unnailed and deposited in the coffin. In Castromuovo, at the Ave Maria, two priests clad as Jews, representing Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, with their servants in costume, repaired to the Calvary, preceded by the Company of the Whites. There, with doleful verses and chants appropriate to the occasion, they performed the various operations of the Deposition, after which the procession took its way to the larger church. . . . In Salaparuta the Calvary is erected in the church. At the preaching of the death, the Crucified is made to bow his head by means of machinery, while guns are fired, trumpets sound, and

amid the silence of the people, impressed by the death of the Redeemer, the strains of a melancholy funeral march are heard. Christ is removed from the Cross and deposited in the coffin by three priests. After the procession of the dead Christ the burial is performed, that is, two priests lay Christ in a fictitious sepulchre, from which at the mass of Easter Saturday the image of the risen Christ issues and is elevated upon the altar by means of machinery."<sup>1</sup> Scenic representations of the same sort, with variations of detail, are exhibited at Easter in the Abruzzi,<sup>2</sup> and probably in many other parts of the Catholic world.<sup>3</sup>

The  
Christian  
festival of  
Easter  
perhaps  
grafted on  
a festival  
of Adonis.

When we reflect how often the Church has skilfully contrived to plant the seeds of the new faith on the old stock of paganism, we may surmise that the Easter celebration of the dead and risen Christ was grafted upon a similar celebration of the dead and risen Adonis, which, as we have seen reason to believe, was celebrated in Syria at the same season. The type, created by Greek artists, of the sorrowful goddess with her dying lover in her arms, resembles and may have been the model of the *Pietà* of Christian art, the Virgin with the dead body of her divine Son in her lap, of which the most celebrated example is the one by Michael Angelo in St. Peter's. That noble group, in which the living sorrow of the mother contrasts so wonderfully with the languor of death in the son, is one of the finest compositions in marble. Ancient Greek art has bequeathed to us few works so beautiful, and none so pathetic.<sup>4</sup>

The  
worship of  
Adonis at  
Bethlehem.

In this connection a well-known statement of Jerome may not be without significance. He tells us that Bethlehem, the traditionary birth-place of the Lord, was shaded by a grove of that still older Syrian Lord, Adonis, and that where the infant Jesus had wept, the

<sup>1</sup> G. Pirrè, *Spettacoli e feste popolari siciliani*, pp. 216-218.

<sup>2</sup> G. Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, pp. 118-120; A. de Nino, *Usi Abruzzesi*, i. 64 sq., ii. 210-212. At Roccamorano part of the Easter spectacle is the death of Judas, who, personated by a living man, pretends to hang himself upon a tree or a great branch, which has been brought into the church and planted near the high altar for the purpose (A.

de Nino, *op. cit.* ii. 211).

<sup>3</sup> The drama of the death and resurrection of Christ was formerly celebrated at Easter in England. See Abbot Gasquet, *Parish Life in Mediæval England*, pp. 177 sqq., 182 sq.

<sup>4</sup> The comparison has already been made by A. Maury, who also compares the Easter ceremonies of the Catholic Church with the rites of Adonis (*Histoire des Religions de la Grèce Antique*, iii. 221).



lover of Venus was bewailed.<sup>1</sup> Though he does not expressly say so, Jerome seems to have thought that the grove of Adonis had been planted by the heathen after the birth of Christ for the purpose of defiling the sacred spot. In this he may have been mistaken. If Adonis was indeed, as I have argued, the spirit of the corn, a more suitable name for his dwelling-place could hardly be found than Bethlehem, "the House of Bread,"<sup>2</sup> and he may well have been worshipped there at his House of Bread long ages before the birth of Him who said, "I am the bread of life."<sup>3</sup> Even on the hypothesis that Adonis followed rather than preceded Christ at Bethlehem, the choice of his sad figure to divert the allegiance of Christians from their Lord cannot but strike us as eminently appropriate when we remember the similarity of the rites which commemorated the death and resurrection of the two. One of the earliest seats of the worship of the new god was Antioch, and at Antioch, as we have seen,<sup>4</sup> the death of the old god was annually celebrated with great solemnity. A circumstance which attended the entrance of Julian into the city at the time of the Adonis festival may perhaps throw some light on the date of its celebration. When the emperor drew near to the city he was received with public prayers as if he had been a god, and he marvelled at the voices of a great multitude who cried that the Star of Salvation had dawned upon them in the East.<sup>5</sup> This may doubtless have been no more than a fulsome compliment paid by an obsequious Oriental crowd to the Roman emperor. But it is also possible that the rising of a bright star regularly gave the signal for the festival, and that as chance would have it the star

The Morning Star, identified with Venus, may have been the signal for the festival of Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> Jerome, *Epist.* lviii. 3 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xlii. 581).

<sup>2</sup> Bethlehem is בֵּיתְלֵחֶם, literally "House of Bread." The name is appropriate, for "the immediate neighbourhood is very fertile, bearing, besides wheat and barley, groves of olive and almond, and vineyards. The wine of Bethlehem ('Talhami') is among the best of Palestine. So great fertility must mean that the site was occupied, in spite of the want of springs, from the earliest times" (*Encyclopædia Biblica*,

i. 560). It was in the harvest-fields of Bethlehem that Ruth, at least in the poet's fancy, listened to the nightingale "amid the alien corn."

<sup>3</sup> John vi. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Above, p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, xlii. 9. 14. "*Urbique propinquans in speciem alticujus numinis votis excipitur publicis, miratus voces multitudinis magnæ, salutare sidus fuluisse rois partibus adclamantis.*"

emerged above the rim of the eastern horizon at the very moment of the emperor's approach. The coincidence, if it happened, could hardly fail to strike the imagination of a superstitious and excited multitude, who might thereupon hail the great man as the deity whose coming was announced by the sign in the heavens. Or the emperor may have mistaken for a greeting to himself the shouts which were addressed to the star. Now Astarte, the divine mistress of Adonis, was identified with the planet Venus, and her changes from a morning to an evening star were carefully noted by the Babylonian astronomers, who drew omens from her alternate appearance and disappearance.<sup>1</sup> Hence we may conjecture that the festival of Adonis was regularly timed to coincide with the appearance of Venus as the Morning or Evening Star. But the star which the people of Antioch saluted at the festival was seen in the East; therefore, if it was indeed Venus, it can only have been the Morning Star. At Aphaca in Syria, where there was a famous temple of Astarte, the signal for the celebration of the rites was apparently given by the flashing of a meteor, which on a certain day fell like a star from the top of Mount Lebanon into the river Adonis. The meteor was thought to be Astarte herself,<sup>2</sup> and its flight through the air might naturally be interpreted as the descent of the amorous goddess to the arms of her lover. At Antioch and elsewhere the appearance of the Morning Star on the day of the festival may in like manner have been hailed as the coming of the goddess of love to wake her dead leman from his earthy bed.

The Star of  
Bethlehem.

If that were so, we may surmise that it was the Morning Star which guided the wise men of the East to Bethlehem,<sup>3</sup> the hallowed spot which heard, in the language of Jerome, the weeping of the infant Christ and the lament for Adonis.

<sup>1</sup> M. Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 370 sqq.; H. Zimmern, in E. Schrader's *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*,<sup>3</sup> p. 424.

<sup>2</sup> Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ii. 5 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, lxvii. 948). The connection of the meteor with the festival of Adonis is not mentioned by Sozomenus, but is con-

firmed by Zosimus, who says (*Hist.* i. 58) that a light like a torch or a globe of fire was seen on the sanctuary at the seasons when the people assembled to worship the goddess and to cast their offerings of gold, silver, and fine raiment into a lake beside the temple. As to Aphaca and the grave of Adonis see above, pp. 23 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew ii. 1-12.



BOOK SECOND  
ATTIS





## CHAPTER I

### THE MYTH AND RITUAL OF ATTIS

ANOTHER of those gods whose supposed death and resurrection struck such deep roots into the faith and ritual of Western Asia is Attis. He was to Phrygia what Adonis was to Syria. Like Adonis, he appears to have been a god of vegetation, and his death and resurrection were annually mourned and rejoiced over at a festival in spring.<sup>1</sup> The legends and rites of the two gods were so much alike that the ancients themselves sometimes identified them.<sup>2</sup> Attis was said to have been a fair young shepherd or herdsman beloved by Cybele, the Mother of the Gods, a great Asiatic goddess of fertility, who had her chief home in Phrygia.<sup>3</sup> Some held that Attis was her son.<sup>4</sup> His birth, like that of many other heroes, is said to have been miraculous. His mother, Nana, was a virgin, who conceived by putting a ripe almond or a pomegranate in her bosom. Indeed in the Phrygian cosmogony an almond figured

Attis the Phrygian counter-part of Adonis.

His relation to Cybele.

His miraculous birth.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, iii. 59. 7; Salustius philosophus, "Dedius et munio," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33; Scholiast on Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 8; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3 and 22. The ancient evidence, literary and inscriptional, as to the myth and ritual of Attis has been collected and discussed by Mr. H. Hepding in his monograph, *Attis, Seine Mythen und sein Kult* (Giessen, 1903).

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 9, p. 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin; Socrates, *Historia*

*Ecclasiastica*, iii. 23. 51 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 223 sqq.; Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 15; *id.*, *Ad Nationes*, i. 10; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, iv. 35. As to Cybele, the Great Mother, the Mother of the Gods, conceived as the source of all life, both animal and vegetable, see Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1638 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Scholiast on Lucian, *Jupiter Tragedus*, 8, p. 60 ed. H. Rabe (vol. iv. p. 173 ed. C. Jacobitz); Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 9, pp. 168, 170 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.

as the father of all things,<sup>1</sup> perhaps because its delicate lilac blossom is one of the first heralds of the spring, appearing on the bare boughs before the leaves have opened. Such tales of virgin mothers are relics of an age of childish ignorance when men had not yet recognised the intercourse of the sexes as the true cause of offspring. That ignorance, still shared by the lowest of existing savages, the aboriginal tribes of central Australia,<sup>2</sup> was doubtless at one time universal among mankind. Even in later times, when people are better acquainted with the laws of nature, they sometimes imagine that these laws may be subject to exceptions, and that miraculous beings may be born in miraculous ways by women who have never known a man. In Palestine to this day it is believed that a woman may conceive by a jinnee or by the spirit of her dead husband. There is at present a man at Nebk who is currently supposed to be the offspring of such a union, and the simple folk have never suspected his mother's virtue.<sup>3</sup> Two different accounts of the death of Attis were current. According to the one he was killed by a boar, like Adonis. According to the other he unmanned himself under a pine-tree, and bled to death on the spot. The latter is said to have been the local story told by the people of Pessinus, a great seat of the worship of Cybele, and the whole legend of which the story forms a part is stamped with a character of rudeness and savagery that speaks strongly for its antiquity.<sup>4</sup> Both tales might claim the support of custom, or rather both were probably invented to explain certain

The death  
of Attis.

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, vii. 17. 11: Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 9, pp. 166, 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 124 sq., 265; *id.*, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 150, 162, 330 sq., 606. See above, pp. 79 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> S. I. Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, pp. 115 sq. See above, pp. 69, 77.

<sup>4</sup> That Attis was killed by a boar was stated by Hermesianax, an elegiac poet of the fourth century B.C. (Pausanias, vii. 17); compare Scholiast

on Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 8. The other story is told by Arnobius (*Adversus Nationes*, v. 5 sqq.) on the authority of Timotheus, an otherwise unknown writer, who professed to derive it from recondite antiquarian works and from the very heart of the mysteries. It is obviously identical with the account which Pausanias (*l.c.*) mentions as the story current in Pessinus. According to Servius (on Virgil, *Aen.* ix. 115), Attis was found bleeding to death under a pine-tree, but the wound which robbed him of his virility and his life was not inflicted by himself.



customs observed by the worshippers. The story of the self-mutilation of Attis is clearly an attempt to account for the self-mutilation of his priests, who regularly castrated themselves on entering the service of the goddess. The story of his death by the boar may have been told to explain why his worshippers, especially the people of Pessinus, abstained from eating swine.<sup>1</sup> After his death Attis is said to have been changed into a pine-tree.<sup>2</sup>

The worship of the Phrygian Mother of the Gods was adopted by the Romans in 204 B.C. towards the close of their long struggle with Hannibal. For their drooping spirits had been opportunely cheered by a prophecy, alleged to be drawn from that convenient farrago of nonsense, the Sibylline Books, that the foreign invader would be driven from Italy if the great Oriental goddess were brought to Rome. Accordingly ambassadors were despatched to her sacred city Pessinus in Phrygia. The small black stone which embodied the mighty divinity was entrusted to them and conveyed to Rome, where it was received with great respect and installed in the temple of Victory on the Palatine Hill. It was the middle of April when the goddess arrived,<sup>3</sup> and she went to work at once. For the harvest that year was such as had not been seen for many a long day,<sup>4</sup> and in the very next year Hannibal and his veterans embarked for Africa. As he looked his last on the coast of Italy, fading behind him in the distance, he could not foresee that Europe, which had repelled the arms, would yet yield to the gods, of the Orient. The vanguard of the conquerors had already encamped in the heart of Italy before the rearguard of the beaten army fell sullenly back from its shores.

We may conjecture, though we are not told, that the Mother of the Gods brought with her the worship of her youthful lover or son to her new home in the West. Certainly the Romans were familiar with the Galli, the

Worship  
of Cybele  
introduced  
into Rome  
in 204 B.C.

Attis and  
his eunuch  
priests the  
Galli at  
Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, vii. 17. 10; Julian, *Orat.* v. 177 B, p. 229 ed. F. C. Hertlein. Similarly at Comana in Pontus, the seat of the worship of the goddess Ma, pork was not eaten, and swine might not even be brought into the city (Strabo, xii. 8. 9, p. 575). As to Comana see above, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ovid, *Metam.* x. 103 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Livy, xxix. chs. 10, 11, and 14; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 259 sqq.; Herodian, ii. 11. As to the stone which represented the goddess see Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 16.

emasculated priests of Attis, before the close of the Republic. These unsexed beings, in their Oriental costume, with little images suspended on their breasts, appear to have been a familiar sight in the streets of Rome, which they traversed in procession, carrying the image of the goddess and chanting their hymns to the music of cymbals and tambourines, flutes and horns, while the people, impressed by the fantastic show and moved by the wild strains, flung alms to them in abundance, and buried the image and its bearers under showers of roses.<sup>1</sup> A further step was taken by the Emperor Claudius when he incorporated the Phrygian worship of the sacred tree, and with it probably the orgiastic rites of Attis, in the established religion of Rome.<sup>2</sup> The great spring festival of Cybele and Attis is best known to us in the form in which it was celebrated at Rome; but as we are informed that the Roman ceremonies were also Phrygian,<sup>3</sup> we may assume that they differed hardly, if at all, from their Asiatic original. The order of the festival seems to have been as follows.<sup>4</sup>

The spring festival of Cybele and Attis at Rome.

On the twenty-second day of March, a pine-tree was cut in the woods and brought into the sanctuary of Cybele, where it was treated as a great divinity. The duty of carrying the sacred tree was entrusted to a guild of Tree-bearers. The trunk was swathed like a corpse with woollen bands and decked with wreaths of violets, for violets were said to have sprung from the blood of Attis, as roses and anemones from the blood of Adonis; and the effigy of a young man, doubtless Attis himself, was tied to the middle of the stem.<sup>5</sup> On the second day of the festival, the twenty-

<sup>1</sup> Lucretius, ii. 598 sqq.; Catullus, lxiii.; Varro, *Satir. Menipp.*, ed. F. Bücheler, pp. 176, 178; Ovid, *Fast.*, iv. 181 sqq., 223 sqq., 361 sqq.; Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* ii. 19; compare Polybius, xxii. 18 ed. L. Dindorf.

<sup>2</sup> Johannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 41. See Robinson Ellis, *Commentary on Catullus* (Oxford, 1876), pp. 206 sq.; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 142 sqq.; Fr. Camont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme Romain* (Paris, 1907), pp. 68 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Arrian, *Tactica*, 33; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* xii. 836.

<sup>4</sup> On the festival see J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 370 sqq.; the calendar of Philocalus, in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> p. 260, with Th. Mommsen's commentary; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, pp. 291 sqq.; *id.*, *Baumkulte*, pp. 572 sqq.; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, pp. 264 sqq.; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 147 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Julian, *Orat.* v. 168 c, p. 218 ed.



third of March, the chief ceremony seems to have been a blowing of trumpets.<sup>1</sup> The third day, the twenty-fourth of March, was known as the Day of Blood: the Archigallus or high-priest drew blood from his arms and presented it as an offering.<sup>2</sup> Nor was he alone in making this bloody sacrifice. Stirred by the wild barbaric music of clashing cymbals, rumbling drums, droning horns, and screaming flutes, the inferior clergy whirled about in the dance with waggling heads and streaming hair, until, rapt into a frenzy of excitement and insensible to pain, they gashed their bodies with potsherds or slashed them with knives in order to bespatter the altar and the sacred tree with their flowing blood.<sup>3</sup> The ghastly rite probably formed part of the mourning for Attis and may have been intended to strengthen him for the resurrection. The Australian aborigines cut themselves in like manner over the graves of their friends for the purpose, perhaps, of enabling them to be born again.<sup>4</sup> Further, we may conjecture, though we are not expressly told, that it was on the same Day of Blood and for the same purpose that the novices sacrificed their virility. Wrought up to the highest pitch of religious excitement they dashed

The Day  
of Blood.

F. C. Hertlein; Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 41; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. chs. 7, 16, 39; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 27; Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Græcorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33. As to the guild of Tree-bearers (*Dendrophori*) see Joannes Lydus, *l.c.*; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4116 sq., 4171-4174, 4176; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 86, 92, 93, 96, 152 sqq.

<sup>1</sup> Julian, *l.c.* and 169 c, p. 219 ed. F. C. Hertlein. The ceremony may have been combined with the old *tubilustrium* or purification of trumpets, which fell on this day. See Joannes Lydus, *De mensibus*, iv. 42; Varro, *De lingua Latina*, vi. 14; Festus, pp. 352, 353 ed. C. O. Müller; W. Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Trebellianus Pollio, *Claudius*, 4; Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *Deorum dialogi*, xii. 1;

Seneca, *Agamemnon*, 686 sqq.; Martial, xl. 84. 3 sq.; Valerius Flaccus, *Argonaut.* viii. 239 sqq.; Statius, *Theb.* x. 170 sqq.; Apuleius, *Metam.* viii. 27; Lactantius, *Divinarum Institutionum Epitome*, 23 (18, vol. I. p. 689 ed. Braudt and Laubmann); H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 158 sqq. As to the music of these dancing dervishes see also Lucretius, ii. 618 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Bussel, in Sir G. Grey's *Journal of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-West and Western Australia*, ii. 330; F. Bonney, "On Some Customs of the Aborigines of the River Darling, New South Wales," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xiii. (1884) pp. 134 sq.; A. W. Howitt, *Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, pp. 451, 465; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 507, 509 sq. The reason assigned for the custom in the text is conjectural. Compare my article "The Origin of Circumcision," *The Independent Review*, November 1904, pp. 208 sqq.

the severed portions of themselves against the image of the cruel goddess. These broken instruments of fertility were afterwards reverently wrapt up and buried in the earth or in subterranean chambers sacred to Cybele,<sup>1</sup> where, like the offering of blood, they may have been deemed instrumental in recalling Attis to life and hastening the general resurrection of nature, which was then bursting into leaf and blossom in the vernal sunshine. Some confirmation of this conjecture is furnished by the savage story that the mother of Attis conceived by putting in her bosom a pomegranate sprung from the severed genitals of a man-monster named Agdestis, a sort of double of Attis.<sup>2</sup>

Eunuch  
priests in  
the service  
of Asiatic  
goddesses.

If there is any truth in this conjectural explanation of the custom, we can readily understand why other Asiatic goddesses of fertility were served in like manner by eunuch priests. These feminine deities required to receive from their male ministers, who personated the divine lovers, the means of discharging their beneficent functions: they had themselves to be impregnated by the life-giving energy before they could transmit it to the world. Goddesses thus ministered to by eunuch priests were the great Artemis of Ephesus<sup>3</sup> and the great Syrian Astarte of Hierapolis,<sup>4</sup> whose sanctuary, frequented by swarms of pilgrims and enriched by the offerings of Assyria and Babylonia, of Arabia and Phoenicia, was perhaps in the days of its glory the most popular in

<sup>1</sup> Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 22 and 24; Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.* i. 21. 16; *id.*, *Epitoma*, 8; Schol. on Lucian, *Jupiter Tragedus*, 8 (p. 60 ed. H. Rabe); Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ix. 115; Prudentius, *Peristephan.* x. 1066 *sqq.*; "Passio Sancti Symphoriani," chs. 2 and 6 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, v. 1463, 1466); Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 14; Scholiast on Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 8; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 163 *sq.* A story told by Clement of Alexandria (*Protrept.* ii. 15, p. 13 ed. Potter) suggests that weaker brethren may have been allowed to sacrifice the virility of a ram instead of their own. We know from inscriptions that rams and bulls were regularly sacrificed at the mysteries of Attis and the Great Mother, and

that the testicles of the bulls were used for a special purpose, probably as a fertility charm. May not the testicles of the rams have been employed for the same purpose? and may not those of both animals have been substitutes for the corresponding organs in men? As to the sacrifices of rams and bulls see G. Zippel, "Das Taurobolium," *Festschrift zum fünfzigjährigen Doctor-jubiläum L. Friedländer* (Leipzig, 1895), pp. 498 *sqq.*; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4118 *sqq.* and below, pp. 229 *sq.*

<sup>2</sup> Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 5 *sq.*

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, xiv. 1. 23, p. 641.

<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 15, 27, 50-53.



the East.<sup>1</sup> Now the unsexed priests of this Syrian goddess resembled those of Cybele so closely that some people took them to be the same.<sup>2</sup> And the mode in which they dedicated themselves to the religious life was similar. The greatest festival of the year at Hierapolis fell at the beginning of spring, when multitudes thronged to the sanctuary from Syria and the regions round about. While the flutes played, the drums beat, and the eunuch priests slashed themselves with knives, the religious excitement gradually spread like a wave among the crowd of onlookers, and many a one did that which he little thought to do when he came as a holiday spectator to the festival. For man after man, his veins throbbing with the music, his eyes fascinated by the sight of the streaming blood, flung his garments from him, leaped forth with a shout, and seizing one of the swords which stood ready for the purpose, castrated himself on the spot. Then he ran through the city, holding the bloody pieces in his hand, till he threw them into one of the houses which he passed in his mad career. The household thus honoured had to furnish him with a suit of female attire and female ornaments, which he wore for the rest of his life.<sup>3</sup> When the tumult of emotion had subsided, and the man had come to himself again, the irrevocable sacrifice must often have been followed by passionate sorrow and lifelong regret. This revulsion of natural human feeling after the frenzies of a fanatical religion is powerfully depicted by Catullus in a celebrated poem.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *op. cit.* 15.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *op. cit.* 49-51.

<sup>4</sup> Catullus, *Carm.* lxiii. I agree with Mr. H. Hepding (*Attis*, p. 140) in thinking that the subject of the poem is not the mythical Attis, but one of his ordinary priests, who bore the name and imitated the sufferings of his god. Thus interpreted the poem gains greatly in force and pathos. The real sorrows of our fellow-men touch us more nearly than the imaginary pangs of the gods.

As the institution of eunuch priests appears to be rare, I will add a few examples. At Stratonicea in Caria a eunuch held a sacred office in con-

nection with the worship of Zeus and Hecate (*Corpus Inscriptionum Græcarum*, No. 2715). Amongst the Ba-sundi and Ba-bwende of the Congo many youths are castrated "in order to more fittingly offer themselves to the phallic worship, which increasingly prevails as we advance from the coast to the interior. At certain villages between Manyanga and Isangila there are curious eunuch dances to celebrate the new moon, in which a white cock is thrown up into the air alive, with clipped wings, and as it falls towards the ground it is caught and plucked by the eunuchs. I was told that originally this used to be a human sacrifice, and that a young boy

The parallel of these Syrian devotees confirms the view that in the similar worship of Cybele the sacrifice of virility took place on the Day of Blood at the vernal rites of the goddess, when the violets, supposed to spring from the red drops of her wounded lover, were in bloom among the pines. Indeed the story that Attis unmanned himself under a pine-tree<sup>1</sup> was clearly devised to explain why his priests did the same beside the sacred violet-wreathed tree at his festival. At all events, we can hardly doubt that the Day of Blood witnessed the mourning for Attis over an effigy of him which was afterwards buried.<sup>2</sup> The image thus laid in the sepulchre was probably the same which had hung upon the tree.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the period of mourning the worshippers fasted from bread, nominally because Cybele had done so in her grief for the death of Attis,<sup>4</sup> but really perhaps for the same reason which induced the women of Harran to abstain from eating anything ground in a mill while they wept for Tammuz.<sup>5</sup> To partake of bread or flour at such a season might have been deemed a wanton profanation of the bruised

The  
mourning  
for Attis.

or girl was thrown up into the air and torn to pieces by the eunuchs as he or she fell, but that of late years slaves had got scarce or manners milder, and a white cock was now substituted" (H. H. Johnston, "On the Races of the Congo," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xiii. (1884) p. 473; compare *id.*, *The River Congo* (London, 1884), p. 409). In India, men who are born eunuchs or in some way deformed are sometimes dedicated to a goddess named Huligamma. They wear female attire and might be mistaken for women. Also men who are or believe themselves impotent will vow to dress as women and serve the goddess in the hope of recovering their virility. See F. Fawcett, "On Basivis," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, ii. 343 sq. In Pegu the English traveller, Alexander Hamilton, witnessed a dance in honour of the gods of the earth. "Hermaproditides, who are numerous in this country, are generally chosen, if there are enough present to make a set for the dance. I saw nine dance like mad folks for above half-an-hour; and

then some of them fell in fits, foaming at the mouth for the space of half-an-hour; and, when their senses are restored, they pretend to foretell plenty or scarcity of corn for that year, if the year will prove sickly or salutary to the people, and several other things of moment" (A. Hamilton, "A New Account of the East Indies," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, viii. 427).

<sup>1</sup> Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 7 and 16; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ix. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, iii. 39; Arrian, *Tactica*, 33; Scholiast on Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 8; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3 and 22; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 16; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ix. 115.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> Arnobius, *l.c.*; Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Above, p. 189.



and broken body of the god. Or the fast may possibly have been a preparation for a sacramental meal.<sup>1</sup>

But when night had fallen, the sorrow of the worshippers was turned to joy. For suddenly a light shone in the darkness: the tomb was opened: the god had risen from the dead; and as the priest touched the lips of the weeping mourners with balm, he softly whispered in their ears the glad tidings of salvation. The resurrection of the god was hailed by his disciples as a promise that they too would issue triumphant from the corruption of the grave.<sup>2</sup> On the morrow, the twenty-fifth day of March, which was reckoned the vernal equinox, the divine resurrection was celebrated with a wild outburst of glee. At Rome, and probably elsewhere, the celebration took the form of a carnival. It was the Festival of Joy (*Hilaria*). A universal licence prevailed. Every man might say and do what he pleased. People went about the streets in disguise. No dignity was too high or too sacred for the humblest citizen to assume with impunity. In the reign of Commodus a band of conspirators thought to take advantage of the masquerade by dressing in the uniform of the Imperial Guard, and so, mingling with the crowd of merry-makers, to get within stabbing distance of the emperor. But the plot miscarried.<sup>3</sup> Even the stern Alexander Severus used to

The Festival of Joy (*Hilaria*) for the resurrection of Attis on March 25th.

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 228 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 22, "Nocte quadam simulacrum in lectica supinum ponitur et per numeros digestis fletibus plangitur: deinde cum se ficta lamentatione satiaverint, lumen infertur: tunc a sacerdote omnium qui flebant fauces unguntur, quibus perunctis hoc lento murmure susurrat:

Θαππεῖτε μὲντοι τοῦ θεοῦ σεσωσμένου·  
τοῦτοι γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἐκ πόνου σωθήσμεν.

*Quid miseros hortaris gaudeant? quid deceptos homines lactari compellis? quam illis spem, quam salutem funesta persuasione promittis? Dei tui mors nota est, vita non parat. . . . Idolum plangis, idolum de sepultura proferis, et miser cum hac feceris, gaudes. Tu deum tuum liberat, tu jacentia lapidis membra componis, tu insensibilia corrigis saxum."* In this passage Firmicus does not expressly mention Attis, but

that the reference is to his rites is made probable by a comparison with chapter 3 of the same writer's work. Compare also Damascius, in Photius's *Bibliotheca*, p. 345 A, 5 sqq., ed. I. Bekker, τὸρε τῇ Ἱεραπόλει ἐγκαθελθῆσας ἰδὼκουσ θναρ ὁ Ἄττης γενέσθαι, καὶ μοι ἐπιτελεῖσθαι παρὰ τῆς μητρὸς τῶν θεῶν τὴν τῶν ἰλαπῶν καλονομένων ἐσπέρην· ὅσπερ ἰδῶλον τὴν ἐξ ἄδου γεγορίαν ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν. See further Fr. Comont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme Romain* (Paris, 1906), p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 21. 10; Flavius Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, i. 1; Julian, *Or.* v. pp. 168 D, 169 D; Damascius, *l.c.*; Herodian, i. 10. 5-7; Sallustianus philosophus, "De diis et mundo," *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33. In like manner Easter Sunday, the Resurrection-day of Christ, was called by some ancient writers the Sunday of Joy (*Dominica Gaudii*).

relax so far on the joyous day as to admit a pheasant to his frugal board.<sup>1</sup> The next day, the twenty-sixth of March, was given to repose, which must have been much needed after the varied excitements and fatigues of the preceding days.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the Roman festival closed on the twenty-seventh of March with a procession to the brook Almo. The silver image of the goddess, with its face of jagged black stone, sat in a waggon drawn by oxen. Preceded by the nobles walking barefoot, it moved slowly, to the loud music of pipes and tambourines, out by the Porta Capena, and so down to the banks of the Almo, which flows into the Tiber just below the walls of Rome. There the high-priest, robed in purple, washed the waggon, the image, and the other sacred objects in the water of the stream. On returning from their bath, the wain and the oxen were strewn with fresh spring flowers. All was mirth and gaiety. No one thought of the blood that had flowed so lately. Even the eunuch priests forgot their wounds.<sup>3</sup>

The  
mysteries  
of Attis.

Such, then, appears to have been the annual solemnisation of the death and resurrection of Attis in spring. But besides these public rites, his worship is known to have comprised certain secret or mystic ceremonies, which probably aimed at bringing the worshipper, and especially the novice, into closer communion with his god. Our information as to the nature of these mysteries and the date of their celebration is unfortunately very scanty, but they seem

The emperors used to celebrate the happy day by releasing from prison all but the worst offenders. See J. Bingham, *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, bk. xx. ch. vi. §§ 5 sq. (Bingham's Works (Oxford, 1855), vii. 317 sqq.).

<sup>1</sup> Aelius Lampridius, *Alexander Severus*, 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> pp. 260, 313 sq.; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 51, 172.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 337-346; Silius Italicus, *Punic.* viii. 365; Valerius Flaccus, *Argonaut.* viii. 239 sqq.; Martial, iii. 47. 1 sq.; Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii. 3. 7; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 32; Pruden-

tius, *Peristephan.* x. 154 sqq. For the description of the image of the goddess see Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, vii. 49. At Carthage the goddess was carried to her bath in a litter, not in a waggon (Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, ii. 4). The bath formed part of the festival in Phrygia, whence the custom was borrowed by the Romans (Arrian, *Tactica*, 33). At Cyzicus the Placianan Mother, a form of Cybele, was served by women called "marine" (*θαλάσσιας*), whose duty it probably was to wash her image in the sea (Ch. Michel, *Récueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 537). See further J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 373; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 133 sq.



to have included a sacramental meal and a baptism of blood. In the sacrament the novice became a partaker of the mysteries by eating out of a drum and drinking out of a cymbal, two instruments of music which figured prominently in the thrilling orchestra of Attis.<sup>1</sup> The fast which accompanied the mourning for the dead god<sup>2</sup> may perhaps have been designed to prepare the body of the communicant for the reception of the blessed sacrament by purging it of all that could defile by contact the sacred elements.<sup>3</sup> In the baptism the devotee, crowned with gold and wreathed with fillets, descended into a pit, the mouth of which was covered with a wooden grating. A bull, adorned with garlands of flowers, its forehead glittering with gold leaf, was then driven on to the grating and there stabbed to death with a consecrated spear. Its hot reeking blood poured in torrents through the apertures, and was received with devout eagerness by the worshipper on every part of his person and garments, till he emerged from the pit, drenched, dripping, and scarlet from head to foot, to receive the homage, nay the adoration, of his fellows as one who had been born again to eternal life and had washed away his sins in the blood of the bull.<sup>4</sup> For some time afterwards the fiction of a new birth was kept up by dieting him on milk like a new-born babe.<sup>5</sup> The regeneration of the worshipper took place at the same time as the

The  
sacrament.

The  
baptism  
of blood.

<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 15, p. 13 ed. Potter; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Above, pp. 226 sq.

<sup>3</sup> H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Prudentius, *Peristephan.* x. 1006-1050; compare Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 28. 8. That the bath of bull's blood (*taurobolium*) was believed to regenerate the devotee for eternity is proved by an inscription found at Rome, which records that a certain Sextilius Agesilaus Aedesius, who dedicated an altar to Attis and the Mother of the Gods, was *taurobolio criobolique in aeternum renatus* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vi. 510; H. Dessau, *Inscrip-*

*tiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4152). The phrase *arcanis perfusionibus in aeternum renatus* occurs in a dedication to Mithra (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vi. No. 736), which, however, is suspected of being spurious. As to the inscriptions which refer to the *taurobolium* see G. Zippel, "Das Taurobolium," in *Festschrift zum fünfzigjährigen Doctorjubiläum L. Friedlaender dargebracht von seinen Schülern* (Leipzig, 1895), pp. 498-520. As to the origin of the *taurobolium* and the meaning of the word, see Fr. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme Romain*, pp. 81-99.

<sup>5</sup> Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33.

The  
Vatican  
a centre of  
the worship  
of Attis.

regeneration of his god, namely at the vernal equinox.<sup>1</sup> At Rome the new birth and the remission of sins by the shedding of bull's blood appear to have been carried out above all at the sanctuary of the Phrygian goddess on the Vatican Hill, at or near the spot where the great basilica of St. Peter's now stands; for many inscriptions relating to the rites were found when the church was being enlarged in 1608 or 1609.<sup>2</sup> From the Vatican as a centre this barbarous system of superstition seems to have spread to other parts of the Roman empire. Inscriptions found in Gaul and Germany prove that provincial sanctuaries modelled their ritual on that of the Vatican.<sup>3</sup> From the same source we learn that the testicles as well as the blood of the bull played an important part in the ceremonies.<sup>4</sup> Probably they were regarded as a powerful charm to promote fertility and hasten the new birth.

<sup>1</sup> Sallustius philosophus, *l.c.*

<sup>2</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vi, Nos. 497-504; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4145, 4147-4151, 4153; *Inscriptiones Graecae Siciliae et Italiae*, ed. G. Kaibel, No. 1020; G. Zippel, *op. cit.* pp. 509 *sq.*, 519; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 83, 86-88, 176; Ch. Huelsen, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, von H. Jordan, i. 3 (Berlin, 1907), pp. 658 *sq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, xiii. No. 1751; H. Dessau, *Inscrip-*

*tionum Latinae Selectae*, No. 4131; G. Wilmanns, *Exempla Inscriptionum Latinarum*, No. 2278; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 267; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 169-171, 176.

<sup>4</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, xiii. No. 1751; G. Wilmanns, *Exempla Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Nos. 119, 123, 124; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4127; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 269; H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 191.



## CHAPTER II

### ATTIS AS A GOD OF VEGETATION

THE original character of Attis as a tree-spirit is brought out plainly by the part which the pine-tree plays in his legend, his ritual, and his monuments.<sup>1</sup> The story that he was a human being transformed into a pine-tree is only one of those transparent attempts at rationalising old beliefs which meet us so frequently in mythology. The bringing in of the pine-tree from the woods, decked with violets and woollen bands, is like bringing in the May-tree or Summer-tree in modern folk-custom; and the effigy which was attached to the pine-tree was only a duplicate representative of the tree-spirit Attis. After being fastened to the tree, the effigy was kept for a year and then burned.<sup>2</sup> The same thing appears to have been sometimes done with the May-pole; and in like manner the effigy of the corn-spirit, made at harvest, is often preserved till it is replaced by a new effigy at next year's harvest.<sup>3</sup> The original intention of such customs was no doubt to maintain the spirit of vegetation in life throughout the year. Why the Phrygians should have worshipped the pine above other trees we can only guess. Perhaps the sight of its changeless, though sombre, green cresting the ridges of the high hills above the fading splendour of the autumn woods in the valleys may have seemed to their eyes to mark it out as the seat of a diviner life, of something exempt from the sad vicissitudes of the seasons, constant and eternal as the sky which

The sanctity of the pine-tree in the worship of Attis.

<sup>1</sup> As to the monuments see H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4143, 4152, 4153; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 82, 83, 88, 89.

<sup>2</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 27.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 205 sq., ii. 179, 184, 185, 193-195.

stooped to meet it. For the same reason, perhaps, ivy was sacred to Attis; at all events, we read that his eunuch priests were tattooed with a pattern of ivy leaves.<sup>1</sup> Another reason for the sanctity of the pine may have been its usefulness. The cones of the stone-pine contain edible nut-like seeds, which have been used as food since antiquity, and are still eaten, for example, by the poorer classes in Rome.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, a wine was brewed from these seeds,<sup>3</sup> and this may partly account for the orgiastic nature of the rites of Cybele, which the ancients compared to those of Dionysus.<sup>4</sup> Further, pine-cones were regarded as symbols or rather instruments of fertility. Hence at the festival of the Thesmophoria they were thrown, along with pigs and other agents or emblems of fecundity, into the sacred vaults of Demeter for the purpose of quickening the ground and the wombs of women.<sup>5</sup>

Attis as a  
corn-god.

Like tree-spirits in general, Attis was apparently thought to wield power over the fruits of the earth or even to be identical with the corn. One of his epithets was "very fruitful": he was addressed as the "reaped green (or yellow) ear of corn"; and the story of his sufferings, death, and resurrection was interpreted as the ripe grain wounded by the reaper, buried in the granary, and coming to life again when it is sown in the ground.<sup>6</sup> A statue of him in the

<sup>1</sup> Etymologicum Magnum, p. 220, line 20, ἡ ἄλλοι, ὁ φιλοπάτωρ Ἱεροκλείου διὰ τὸ φύλλα κισσοῦ κατέστιχθαι, ὡς οἱ γάλλοι. Ἀεὶ γὰρ ταῖς Διονυσιακαῖς τελεταῖς κισσῷ ἐστεφανοῦντο. But there seems to be some confusion here between the rites of Dionysus and those of Attis; ivy was certainly sacred to Dionysus (Pausanias, i. 31. 6 with my note). Compare, C. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, i. 657, who, in the passage quoted, rightly defends the readings κατέστιχθαι and ἐστεφανοῦντο.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,<sup>9</sup> xix. 105. Compare Athenaeus, ii. 49, p. 57. The nuts of the silver-pine (*Pinus edulis*) are a favourite food of the Californian Indians (S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, p. 421); the Wintun Indians hold a pine-nut dance when the nuts are fit to be gathered (*ib.* p. 237). The Shuswap Indians of British Columbia collect the cones of various

sorts of pines and eat the nutlets which they extract from them. See G. M. Dawson, "Notes on the Shuswap People of British Columbia," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, ix. (Montreal, 1892), Transactions, section ii. p. 22. The Gilyaks of the Amoor valley in like manner eat the nutlets of the Siberian stone-pine (L. von Schrenk, *Die Völker des Amur-Landes*, iii. 440). See also the commentators on Herodotus, iv. 109 φθιμπορρήγου.

<sup>3</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xiv. 103.

<sup>4</sup> Strabo, x. 3. 12 sqq., pp. 469 sqq. However, tipsy people were excluded from the sanctuary of Attis (Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 6).

<sup>5</sup> Scholiast on Lucian, *Dial. Meretr.* ii. 1, p. 276 ed. H. Rabe.

<sup>6</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 8 and 9, pp. 162, 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin; Fir-



Lateran Museum at Rome clearly indicates his relation to the fruits of the earth, and particularly to the corn; for it represents him with a bunch of ears of corn and fruit in his hand, and a wreath of pine-cones, pomegranates, and other fruits on his head, while from the top of his Phrygian cap ears of corn are sprouting.<sup>1</sup> On a stone urn, which contained the ashes of an Archigallus or high-priest of Attis, the same idea is expressed in a slightly different way. The top of the urn is adorned with ears of corn carved in relief, and it is surmounted by the figure of a cock, whose tail consists of ears of corn.<sup>2</sup> Cybele in like manner was conceived as a goddess of fertility who could make or mar the fruits of the earth; for the people of Augustodunum (Autun) in Gaul used to cart her image about in a waggon for the good of the fields and vineyards, while they danced and sang before it,<sup>3</sup> and we have seen that in Italy an unusually fine harvest was attributed to the recent arrival of the Great Mother.<sup>4</sup> The bathing of the image of the goddess in a river may well have been a rain-charm to ensure an abundant supply of moisture for the crops. Or perhaps, as Mr. Hepding has suggested, the union of Cybele and

Cybele as a goddess of fertility.

The bathing of her image either a rain-charm or a marriage-rite.

micus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3; Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33. Others identified him with the spring flowers. See Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelii*, iii. 11. 8 and 12, iii. 13. 10 ed. F. A. Heinichen; Augustine, *De civitate dei*, vii. 25.

<sup>1</sup> W. Helbig, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen classischer Altertümer in Rom*,<sup>2</sup> i. 481, No. 721.

<sup>2</sup> The urn is in the Lateran Museum at Rome (No. 1046). It is not described by W. Helbig in his *Führer*. The inscription on the urn (*M. Modius Maximus archigallus coloniae Ostiensis*) is published by H. Dessau (*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4162), who does not notice the curious and interesting composition of the cock's tail. The bird is chosen as an emblem of the priest with a punning reference to the word *gallus*, which in Latin means a cock as well as a priest of Attis.

<sup>3</sup> Gregory of Tours, *De gloria confessorum*, 77 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, lxxi. 884). That the goddess here referred to was Cybele and not a native Gallic deity, as I formerly thought (*Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, p. 178), seems proved by the "Passion of St. Symphorian," chs. 2 and 6 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, v. 1463, 1466). Gregory and the author of the "Passion of St. Symphorian" call the goddess simply Berecynthia, the latter writer adding "the Mother of the Demons," which is plainly a Christian version of the title "Mother of the Gods."

<sup>4</sup> Above, p. 221. In the island of Thera an ox, wheat, barley, wine, and "other first-fruits of all that the seasons produce" were offered to the Mother of the Gods, plainly because she was deemed the source of fertility. See Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 630.

Attis, like that of Aphrodite and Adonis, was dramatically represented at the festival, and the subsequent bath of the goddess was a ceremonial purification of the bride, such as is often observed at human marriages.<sup>1</sup> In like manner Aphrodite is said to have bathed after her union with Adonis,<sup>2</sup> and so did Demeter after her intercourse with Poseidon.<sup>3</sup> Hera washed in the springs of the river Burrha after her marriage with Zeus;<sup>4</sup> and every year she recovered her virginity by bathing in the spring of Canathus.<sup>5</sup> However that may be, the rules of diet observed by the worshippers of Cybele and Attis at their solemn fasts are clearly dictated by a belief that the divine life of these deities manifested itself in the fruits of the earth, and especially in such of them as are actually hidden by the soil. For while the devotees were allowed to partake of flesh, though not of pork or fish, they were forbidden to eat seeds and the roots of vegetables, but they might eat the stalks and upper parts of the plants.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 215-217; compare *id.* 175, n. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ptolemaeus, *Nov. Hist.* i. p. 183 of A. Westermann's *Mythographi Graeci*.

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias, viii. 25. 5 *sq.*

<sup>4</sup> Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xii. 30. The place was in Mesopotamia, and the goddess was probably Astarte. So Lucian (*De dea Syria*) calls the Astarte of Hierapolis "the Assyrian Hera."

<sup>5</sup> Pausanias, ii. 38. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Julian, *Orat.* v. 173 *sqq.* (pp. 225 *sqq.* ed. F. C. Hertlein); H. Hepding,

*Attis*, pp. 155-157. However, apples, pomegranates, and dates were also forbidden. The story that the mother of Attis conceived him through contact with a pomegranate (above, p. 219) might explain the prohibition of that fruit. But the reasons for tabooing apples and dates are not apparent, though Julian tried to discover them. He suggested that dates may have been forbidden because the date-palm does not grow in Phrygia, the native land of Cybele and Attis.



## CHAPTER III

### ATTIS AS THE FATHER GOD

THE name Attis appears to mean simply "father."<sup>1</sup> This explanation, suggested by etymology, is confirmed by the observation that another name for Attis was Papas;<sup>2</sup> for Papas has all the appearance of being a common form of that word for "father" which occurs independently in many distinct families of speech all the world over. Similarly the mother of Attis was named Nana,<sup>3</sup> which is itself a form of the world-wide word for "mother." "The immense list of such words collected by Buschmann shows that the types *pa* and *ta*, with the similar forms *ap* and *at*, preponderate in the world as names for 'father,' while *ma* and *na*, *am* and *an*, preponderate as names for 'mother.'"<sup>4</sup>

The name Attis seems to mean "father."

Thus the mother of Attis is only another form of his divine mistress the great Mother Goddess,<sup>5</sup> and we are brought back to the myth that the lovers were mother and son. The story that Nana conceived miraculously without commerce with the other sex shows that the Mother Goddess of Phrygia herself was viewed, like other goddesses of the

Relation of Attis to the Mother Goddess.

<sup>1</sup> P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, iii. 58. 4; Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium hæresium*, i. 9, p. 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin. A Latin dedication to *Atte Papa* has been found at Aquileia (Cumont, in Pauly-Wissowa's *Realencyclopædie*, ii. 2180, s.v. "Attepata"; H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 86). Greek dedications to Papas or to Zeus Papas

occur in Phrygia (H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 78 *sq.*). Compare A. B. Cook, "Zeus, Jupiter, and the Oak," *Classical Review*, xviii. (1904) p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 6 and 13.

<sup>4</sup> E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> i. 223.

<sup>5</sup> Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1648.

same primitive type, as a Virgin Mother.<sup>1</sup> That view of her character does not rest on a perverse and mischievous theory that virginity is more honourable than matrimony. It is derived, as I have already indicated, from a state of savagery in which the mere fact of paternity was unknown. That explains why in later times, long after the true nature of paternity had been ascertained, the Father God was often a much less important personage in mythology than his divine partner the Mother Goddess. With regard to Attis in his paternal character it deserves to be noticed that the Bithynians used to ascend to the tops of the mountains and there call upon him under the name of Papas. The custom is attested by Arrian,<sup>2</sup> who as a native of Bithynia must have had good opportunities of observing it. We may perhaps infer from it that the Bithynians conceived Attis as a sky-god or heavenly father, like Zeus, with whom indeed Arrian identifies him. If that were so, the story of the loves of Attis and Cybele, the Father God and the Mother Goddess, might be in one of its aspects a particular version of the widespread myth which represents Mother Earth fertilised by Father Sky;<sup>3</sup> and, further, the story of the

Attis as a  
Sky-god or  
Heavenly  
Father.

<sup>1</sup> She is called a "motherless virgin" by Julian (*Or.* v. 166 B, p. 215 ed. F. C. Hertlein), and there was a *Parthenon* or virgin's chamber in her sanctuary at Cyzicus (Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 538). Compare Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1648, iii. 4 sq. Another great goddess of fertility who was conceived as a Virgin Mother was the Egyptian Neith or Net. She is called "the Great Goddess, the Mother of All the Gods," and was believed to have brought forth Ra, the Sun, without the help of a male partner. See C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 111; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), i. 457-462. The latter writer says (p. 462): "In very early times Net was the personification of the eternal female principle of life which was self-sustaining and self-existent, and was secret and unknown, and all-pervading; the more material thinkers,

whilst admitting that she brought forth her son Ra without the aid of a husband, were unable to divorce from their minds the idea that a male germ was necessary for its production, and finding it impossible to derive it from a being external to the goddess, assumed that she herself provided not only the substance which was to form the body of Ra but also the male germ which fecundated it. Thus Net was the type of partheno-genesis."

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Eustathius on Homer, *Il.* v. 408; *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 592, Frag. 30.

<sup>3</sup> E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> i. 321 sqq., ii. 270 sqq. To take a single example, the Ewe people of Togo-land, in West Africa, think that the Earth is the wife of the Sky, and that their marriage takes place in the rainy season, when the rain causes the seeds to sprout and bear fruit. These fruits they regard as the children of Mother Earth, who in their opinion



emasculation of Attis would be parallel to the Greek legend that Cronus castrated his father, the old sky-god Uranus,<sup>1</sup> and was himself in turn castrated by his own son, the younger sky-god Zeus.<sup>2</sup> The tale of the mutilation of the sky-god by his son has been plausibly explained as a myth of the violent separation of the earth and sky, which some races, for example the Polynesians, suppose to have originally clasped each other in a close embrace.<sup>3</sup> Yet it seems unlikely that an order of eunuch priests like the Galli should have been based on a purely cosmogonic myth: why should they continue for all time to be mutilated because the sky-god was so in the beginning? The custom of castration must surely have been designed to meet a constantly recurring need, not merely to reflect a mythical event which happened at the creation of the world. Such a need is the maintenance of the fruitfulness of the earth, annually imperilled by the changes of the seasons. Yet the theory that the mutilation of the priests of Attis and the burial of the severed parts were designed to fertilise the ground may perhaps be reconciled with the cosmogonic myth if we remember the old opinion, held apparently by many peoples, that the creation of the world is year by year repeated in that great transformation which depends ultimately on the annual increase of

Stories of  
the emascu-  
lation  
of the  
Sky-god.

is the mother also of men and of gods. See J. Spieth, *Die Erde-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 464, 548.

<sup>1</sup> Hesiod, *Theogony*, 159 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 16; Aristides, *Or. iii.* (vol. i. p. 35 ed. G. Dindorf); Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 983.

<sup>3</sup> A. Lang, *Custom and Myth* (London, 1884), pp. 45 sqq.; *id.*, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (London, 1887), i. 299 sqq. In Egyptian mythology the separation of heaven and earth was ascribed to Shu, the god of light, who insinuated himself between the bodies of Seb (Keb) the earth-god and of Nut the sky-goddess. On the monuments Shu is represented holding up the star-spangled body of Nut on his hands, while Seb reclines

on the ground. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 90, 97 sq., 100, 105; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion* (Berlin, 1905), pp. 31 sq.; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 33 sq. Thus contrary to the usual mythical conception the Egyptians regarded the earth as male and the sky as female. An allusion in the *Book of the Dead* (ch. 69, vol. ii. p. 235, Budge's translation) has been interpreted as a hint that Osiris mutilated his father Seb at the separation of earth and heaven, just as Cronus mutilated his father Uranus. See H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, p. 581; E. A. Wallis Budge, *op. cit.* ii. 99 sq. Sometimes the Egyptians conceived the sky as a great cow standing with its legs on the earth. See A. Erman, *op. cit.* pp. 5 sq.

the sun's heat.<sup>1</sup> However, the evidence for the celestial aspect of Attis is too slight to allow us to speak with any confidence on this subject. A trace of that aspect appears to survive in the star-spangled cap which he is said to have received from Cybele,<sup>2</sup> and which is figured on some monuments supposed to represent him.<sup>3</sup> His identification with the Phrygian moon-god Men Tyrannus<sup>4</sup> points in the same direction, but is probably due rather to the religious speculation of a later age than to genuine popular tradition.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The evidence of this will be given in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*.

<sup>2</sup> Julian, *Or.* v. pp. 165 B, 170 D (pp. 214, 221, ed. F. C. Hertlein); Sallustius philosophus, "De diis et mundo," iv., *Fragmenta Philosophorum Graecorum*, ed. F. G. A. Mullach, iii. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Drexler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2745; H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 120, n. 8.

<sup>4</sup> H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae*

*Selectae*, Nos. 4146-4149; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 82, 86 sq., 89 sq. As to Men Tyrannus, see Drexler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Myth.* ii. 2687 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> On the other hand Prof. W. M. Ramsay holds that Attis and Men are deities of similar character and origin, but differentiated from each other by development in different surroundings (*Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 169); but he denies that Men was a moon-god (*op. cit.* i. 104, n. 4).



## CHAPTER IV

### HUMAN REPRESENTATIVES OF ATTIS

FROM inscriptions it appears that both at Pessinus and Rome the high-priest of Cybele regularly bore the name of Attis.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore a reasonable conjecture that he played the part of his namesake, the legendary Attis, at the annual festival.<sup>2</sup> We have seen that on the Day of Blood he drew blood from his arms, and this may have been an imitation of the self-inflicted death of Attis under the pine-tree. It is not inconsistent with this supposition that Attis was also represented at these ceremonies by an effigy; for instances can be shown in which the divine being is first represented by a living person and afterwards by an effigy, which is then burned or otherwise destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps we may go a step farther and conjecture that this mimic killing of the priest, accompanied by a real effusion of his blood, was in Phrygia, as it has been elsewhere, a substitute for a human sacrifice which in earlier times was actually offered. Professor W. M. Ramsay, whose authority on all questions relating to Phrygia no one will dispute, is of opinion that at these Phrygian ceremonies "the repre-

The high priest of Attis bore the god's name and seems to have personated him.

The drawing of the high priest's blood may have been a substitute for putting him to death in the character of the god.

<sup>1</sup> In letters of Eumenes and Attalus, preserved in inscriptions at Sivrihisar, the priest at Pessinus is addressed as Attis. See A. von Demaskewski, "Briefe der Attaliden an den Priester von Pessinus," *Archaeologische-epigraphische Mittheilungen aus Oesterreich-Ungarn*, viii. (1884) pp. 96, 98; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 43; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 315. For more evidence of in-

scriptions see H. Hepding, *Attis*, p. 79; Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, I. 724. See also Polybius, xii. 18 (20), (ed. L. Dindorf), who mentions a priest of the Mother of the Gods named Attis at Pessinus.

<sup>2</sup> The conjecture is that of Henzen, in *Annal. d. Inst.* 1856, p. 110, referred to by Rapp, *l.c.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>3</sup> I. 209, ii. 30, 62 sq.

sentative of the god was probably slain each year by a cruel death, just as the god himself died."<sup>1</sup> We know from Strabo<sup>2</sup> that the priests of Pessinus were at one time potentates as well as priests; they may, therefore, have belonged to that class of divine kings or popes whose duty it was to die each year for their people and the world.

The name of Attis, it is true, does not occur among the names of the old kings of Phrygia, who seem to have borne the names of Midas and Gordias in alternate generations; but a very ancient inscription carved in the rock above a famous Phrygian monument, which is known as the Tomb of Midas, records that the monument was made for, or dedicated to, King Midas by a certain Ates, whose name is doubtless identical with Attis, and who, if not a king himself, may have been one of the royal family.<sup>3</sup> It is worthy of note also that the name Atys, which, again, appears to be only another form of Attis, is recorded as that of an early king of Lydia;<sup>4</sup> and that a son of Croesus, king of Lydia, not only bore the name Atys but was said to have been killed, while he was hunting a boar, by a member of the royal Phrygian family, who traced his lineage to King Midas and had fled to the court of Croesus because he had unwittingly slain his own brother.<sup>5</sup> Scholars have recognised in this story of the death of Atys, son of Croesus, a mere double of the myth of Attis;<sup>6</sup> and in view of the facts which have come before us in the present inquiry<sup>7</sup> it is a remarkable circumstance that the myth of a slain

<sup>1</sup> Article "Phrygia," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed. xviii. (1885) p. 853. Elsewhere, speaking of the religions of Asia Minor in general, the same writer says: "The highest priests and priestesses played the parts of the great gods, in the mystic ritual, wore their dress, and bore their names" (*Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, i. 101).

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, xii. 5. 3, p. 567.

<sup>3</sup> W. M. Ramsay, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1889) pp. 379 sqq.; *id.*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, x. (1889) pp. 156 sqq.; Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, v. 82 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, i. 94. According to

Prof. W. M. Ramsay, the conquering and ruling caste in Lydia belonged to the Phrygian stock (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) p. 351).

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, i. 34-45. The tradition that Croesus would allow no iron weapon to come near Atys suggests that a similar taboo may have been imposed on the Phrygian priests named Attis. For taboos of this sort see *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 344 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> H. Stein on Herodotus, i. 43; Ed. Meyer, s.v. "Atys," in Pauly-Wissowa's, *Real-Encyclopædie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ii. 2, col. 2262.

<sup>7</sup> See above, pp. 10, 13 sq., 42 sqq., 84.



god should be told of a king's son. May we conjecture that the Phrygian priests who bore the name of Attis and represented the god of that name were themselves members, perhaps the eldest sons, of the royal house, to whom their fathers, uncles, brothers, or other kinsmen deputed the honour of dying a violent death in the character of gods, while they reserved to themselves the duty of living, as long as nature allowed them, in the humbler character of kings? If this were so, the Phrygian dynasty of Midas may have presented a close parallel to the Greek dynasty of Athamas, in which the eldest sons seem to have been regularly destined to the altar.<sup>1</sup> But it is also possible that the divine priests who bore the name of Attis may have belonged to that indigenous race which the Phrygians, on their irruption into Asia from Europe, appear to have found and conquered in the land afterwards known as Phrygia.<sup>2</sup> On the latter hypothesis the priests may have represented an older and higher civilisation than that of their barbarous conquerors. Be that as it may, the god they personated was a deity of vegetation whose divine life manifested itself especially in the pine-tree and the violets of spring; and if they died in the character of that divinity, they corresponded to the mummers who are still slain in mimicry by European peasants in spring, and to the priest who was slain long ago in grim earnest on the wooded shore of the Lake of Nemi.

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 34 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> See W. M. Ramsay, *s.v.* "Phrygia," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th ed. xviii. 849 sq.; *id.*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, ix. (1888) pp. 350 sq. Prof.

P. Kretschmer holds that both Cybele and Attis were gods of the indigenous Asiatic population, not of the Phrygian invaders (*Einführung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, pp. 194 sq.).

The Phrygian priests of Attis may have been members of the royal family.

## CHAPTER V

### THE HANGED GOD

The way in which the representatives of Attis were put to death is perhaps shown by the legend of Marsyas, who was hung on a pine-tree and flayed by Apollo.

A REMINISCENCE of the manner in which these old representatives of the deity were put to death is perhaps preserved in the famous story of Marsyas. He was said to be a Phrygian satyr or Silenus, according to others a shepherd or herdsman, who played sweetly on the flute. A friend of Cybele, he roamed the country with the disconsolate goddess to soothe her grief for the death of Attis.<sup>1</sup> The composition of the Mother's Air, a tune played on the flute in honour of the Great Mother Goddess, was attributed to him by the people of Celaenae in Phrygia.<sup>2</sup> Vain of his skill, he challenged Apollo to a musical contest, he to play on the flute and Apollo on the lyre. Being vanquished, Marsyas was tied up to a pine-tree and flayed or cut limb from limb either by the victorious Apollo or by a Scythian slave.<sup>3</sup> His skin was shown at Celaenae in historical times. It

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, iii. 58 *sq.* As to Marsyas in the character of a shepherd or herdsman see Hyginus, *Fab.* 165; Nonnus, *Dionys.* i. 41 *sqq.* He is called a Silenus by Pausanias (i. 24. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, x. 30. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Apollodorus, i. 4. 2; Hyginus, *Fab.* 165. Many ancient writers mention that the tree on which Marsyas suffered death was a pine. See Apollodorus, *l.c.*; Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 301 *sq.*, with the Scholiast's note; Lucian, *Tragœdopolastra*, 314 *sq.*; Archias Mitylenæus, in *Anthologia Palatina*, vii. 696; Philostratus Junior, *Imagines*, i. 3; Longus,

*Pastor.* iv. 8; Zenobius, *Cent.* iv. 81; J. Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, i. 353 *sqq.* Pliny alone declares the tree to have been a plane, which according to him was still shown at Auloerene on the way from Apamea to Phrygia (*Nat. Hist.* xvi. 240). On a candelabra in the Vatican the defeated Marsyas is represented hanging on a pine-tree (W. Helbig, *Führer*,<sup>2</sup> i. 225 *sq.*); but the monumental evidence is not consistent on this point (Jessen, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 2442). The position which the pine held in the myth and ritual of Cybele supports the preponderance of ancient testimony in favour of that tree.



hung at the foot of the citadel in a cave from which the river Marsyas rushed with an impetuous and noisy tide to join the Maeander.<sup>1</sup> So the Adonis bursts full-born from the precipices of the Lebanon; so the blue river of Ibreez leaps in a crystal jet from the red rocks of the Taurus; so the stream, which now rumbles deep underground, used to gleam for a moment on its passage from darkness to darkness in the dim light of the Corycian cave. In all these copious fountains, with their glad promise of fertility and life, men of old saw the hand of God and worshipped him beside the rushing river with the music of its tumbling waters in their ears. At Celaenae, if we can trust tradition, the piper Marsyas, hanging in his cave, had a soul for harmony even in death; for it is said that at the sound of his native Phrygian melodies the skin of the dead satyr used to thrill, but that if the musician struck up an air in praise of Apollo it remained deaf and motionless.<sup>2</sup>

In this Phrygian satyr, shepherd, or herdsman who enjoyed the friendship of Cybele, practised the music so characteristic of her rites,<sup>3</sup> and died a violent death on her sacred tree, the pine, may we not detect a close resemblance to Attis, the favourite shepherd or herdsman of the goddess, who is himself described as a piper,<sup>4</sup> is said to have perished under a pine-tree, and was annually represented by an effigy hung, like Marsyas, upon a pine? We may conjecture that in old days the priest who bore the name and played the part of Attis at the spring festival of Cybele was regularly hanged or otherwise slain upon the sacred tree, and that this barbarous custom was afterwards mitigated into the form in which it is known to us in later times, when the priest merely drew blood from his body under the tree and attached an effigy instead of himself to its trunk. In the holy grove at Upsala men and animals were sacrificed by

Marsyas  
apparently  
a double  
of Attis.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, vii. 26; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, i. 2. 8; Livy, xxxviii. 13. 6; Quintus Curtius, iii. 1. 1-5; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* v. 106. Herodotus calls the river the Catarrhactes.

<sup>2</sup> Aelian, *Var. Hist.* xiii. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Catullus, lxiii. 22; Lucretius, ii. 620; Ovid, *Fasti*, iv. 181 sq., 341;

Polyaenus, *Strategem.* viii. 53. 4. Flutes or pipes often appear on her monuments. See H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4100, 4143, 4145, 4152, 4153.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 9, p. 168, ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.

The hanging of Odin and his human victims on sacred trees.

being hanged upon the sacred trees.<sup>1</sup> The human victims dedicated to Odin were regularly put to death by hanging or by a combination of hanging and stabbing, the man being strung up to a tree or a gallows and then wounded with a spear. Hence Odin was called the Lord of the Gallows or the God of the Hanged, and he is represented sitting under a gallows-tree.<sup>2</sup> Indeed he is said to have been sacrificed to himself in the ordinary way, as we learn from the weird verses of the *Havamal*, in which the god describes how he acquired his divine power by learning the magic runes :

*I know that I hung on the windy tree  
For nine whole nights,  
Wounded with the spear, dedicated to Odin,  
Myself to myself.*<sup>3</sup>

The hanging of Artemis.

In Greece the great goddess Artemis herself appears to have been annually hanged in effigy in her sacred grove of Condylea among the Arcadian hills, and there accordingly she went by the name of the Hanged One.<sup>4</sup> Indeed a trace

<sup>1</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Descriptio insularum Aquilonis*, 27 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, cxlvi. 643).

<sup>2</sup> S. Bugge, *Studien über die Entstehung der nördlichen Götter- und Heldensagen* (Munich, 1889), pp. 339 sqq.; K. Simrock, *Die Edda*,<sup>8</sup> p. 382; K. Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, iv, 244 sq.; H. M. Chadwick, *The Cult of Oðin* (London, 1899), pp. 3-20. The old English custom of hanging and disembowelling traitors was probably derived from a practice of thus sacrificing them to Odin; for among many races, including the Teutonic and Latin peoples, capital punishment appears to have been originally a religious rite, a sacrifice or consecration of the criminal to the god whom he had offended. See F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, pp. 8 sq.; K. von Amira, in H. Paul's *Grundriss der germanischen Philologie*,<sup>2</sup> lii. 197 sq.; Vigfussen and Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, i. 410; W. Golther, *Handbuch der germanischen Mythologie* (Leipzig, 1895), pp. 548 sq.; Th. Mommsen, *Roman History*, bk. i. ch. 12 (vol. i. p. 192, ed. 1868); id.,

*Römisches Strafrecht* (Leipzig, 1899), pp. 900 sqq.; F. Granger, *The Worship of the Romans* (London, 1895), pp. 259 sqq.; E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, i. (London, 1906) pp. 439 sq. So, too, among barbarous peoples the slaughter of prisoners in war is often a sacrifice offered by the victors to the gods to whose aid they ascribe the victory. See A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, pp. 169 sq.; W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*,<sup>2</sup> i. 289; Diodorus Siculus, xx. 65; Strabo, vii. 2. 3, p. 294; Caesar, *De bello Gallico*, vi. 17; Tacitus, *Annals*, i. 61, xiii. 57; Procopius, *De bello Gothico*, ii. 15. 24, ii. 25. 9; Jornandes, *Gothica*, v. 41; J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> i. 36 sq.; Fr. Schwally, *Semitische Kriagsaltertümer* (Leipzig, 1901), pp. 29 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> *Havamal*, 139 sqq. (K. Simrock, *Die Edda*,<sup>8</sup> p. 55; K. Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, v. 270 sq.).

<sup>4</sup> Pausanias, viii. 23. 6 sq. The story, mentioned by Pausanias, that some children tied a rope round the



of a similar rite may perhaps be detected even at Ephesus, the most famous of her sanctuaries, in the legend of a woman who hanged herself and was thereupon dressed by the compassionate goddess in her own divine garb and called by the name of Hecate.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, at Melite in Phthia, a story was told of a girl named Aspalis who hanged herself, but who appears to have been merely a form of Artemis. For after her death her body could not be found, but an image of her was discovered standing beside the image of Artemis, and the people bestowed on it the title of Hecaeerge or Far-shooter, one of the regular epithets of the goddess. Every year the virgins sacrificed a young goat to the image by hanging it, because Astypalis was said to have hanged herself.<sup>2</sup> The sacrifice may have been a substitute for hanging an image or a human representative of Artemis. Again, in Rhodes the fair Helen was worshipped under the title of Helen of the Tree, because the queen of the island had caused her handmaids, disguised as Furies, to string her up to a bough.<sup>3</sup> That the Asiatic Greeks sacrificed animals in this fashion is proved by coins of Ilium, which represent an ox or cow hanging on a tree and stabbed with a knife by a man, who sits among the branches or on the animal's back.<sup>4</sup>

The hanging of Helen.

The hanging of animal victims.

neck of the image of Artemis was probably invented to explain a ritual practice of the same sort, as scholars have rightly perceived. See L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, i.<sup>4</sup> 305, note 2; L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, ii. 428 sq.; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 232 sqq. The Arcadian worship of the Hanged Artemis was noticed by Callimachus. See Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 38, p. 32, ed. Potter.

<sup>1</sup> Eustathius on Homer, *Od.* xii. 85, p. 1714; I. Bekker, *Anecdota Graeca*, i. 336 sq., no. Ἀγῶνα Ἑκάτης. The goddess Hecate was sometimes identified with Artemis, though in origin probably she was quite distinct. See L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, ii. 499 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Antoninus Liberalis, *Transform.* xlii.

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias, iii. 19. 9 sq.

<sup>4</sup> H. von Fritze, "Zum griechischen Opferritual," *Jahrbuch des kaiser.*

*deutsch. Archäologischen Instituts*, xviii. (1903) pp. 58-67. In the ritual of Eleusis the sacrificial oxen were sometimes lifted up by young men from the ground. See Dittenberger, *Syllage Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 521 (ἔφαρτο δὲ καὶ τοῖς μυστηρίοις τοῖς βοῦς ἐν Ἐλευσίνι τῷ θύοιαι, κτλ.); Roberts and Gardner, *Introduction to Greek Epigraphy*, ii. No. 65. In this inscription the word ἔφαρτο is differently interpreted by P. Stengel, who supposes that it refers merely to turning backwards and upwards the head of the victim. See P. Stengel, "Zum griechischen Opferritual," *Jahrbuch des kaiser. deutsch. Archäologischen Instituts*, xviii. (1903) pp. 113-123. But it seems highly improbable that so trivial an act should be solemnly commemorated in an inscription among the exploits of the young men (*epheboi*) who performed it. On the other hand, we know that at Nysa the young men did lift and carry

At Hierapolis also the victims were hung on trees before they were burnt.<sup>1</sup> With these Greek and Scandinavian parallels before us we can hardly dismiss as wholly improbable the conjecture that in Phrygia a man-god may have hung year by year on the sacred but fatal tree.

Use of the  
skins of  
human  
victims to  
effect their  
resurrec-  
tion.

The tradition that Marsyas was flayed and that his skin was exhibited at Celaenae down to historical times may well reflect a ritual practice of flaying the dead god and hanging his skin upon the pine as a means of effecting his resurrection, and with it the revival of vegetation in spring. Similarly, in ancient Mexico the human victims who personated gods were often flayed and their bloody skins worn by men who appear to have represented the dead deities come to life again.<sup>2</sup> When a Scythian king died, he was buried in a grave along with one of his concubines, his cup-bearer, cook, groom, lacquey, and messenger, who were all killed for the purpose, and a great barrow was heaped up over the grave. A year afterwards fifty of his servants and fifty of his best horses were strangled; and their bodies, having been disembowelled and cleaned out, were stuffed with chaff, sewn up, and set on scaffolds round about the barrow, every dead man bestriding a dead horse, which was bitted and bridled as in life.<sup>3</sup> These strange horsemen were no doubt supposed to mount guard over the king. The setting up of their stuffed skins might be thought to ensure their ghostly resurrection.

Skins of  
men and  
horses  
stuffed and  
set up at  
graves.

That some such notion was entertained by the Scythians is made probable by the account which the mediaeval traveller de Plano Carpini gives of the funeral customs of the Mongols; for the Scythians seem to have been a Mongolian people. The traveller tells us that when a noble Mongol died, the custom was to bury him seated in the middle of a tent, along with a horse saddled and bridled, and a mare and her foal. Also they used to eat another horse, stuff the carcass with straw, and set it up on poles. All this they did in order that in the other world the dead man might have a tent to live in, a mare to yield

the sacrificial bull, and that the act was deemed worthy of commemoration on the coins. See above, p. 171.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 136 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, iv. 71 sq.



milk, and a steed to ride, and that he might be able to breed horses. Moreover, the bones of the horse which they ate were burned for the good of his soul.<sup>1</sup> When the Arab traveller Ibn Batuta visited Peking in the fourteenth century, he witnessed the funeral of an emperor of China who had been killed in battle. The dead sovereign was buried along with four young female slaves and six guards in a vault, and an immense mound like a hill was piled over him. Four horses were then made to run round the hillock till they could run no longer, after which they were killed, impaled, and set up beside the tomb.<sup>2</sup> When an Indian of Patagonia dies, he is buried in a pit along with some of his property. Afterwards his favourite horse, having been killed, skinned, and stuffed, is propped up on sticks with its head turned towards the grave. At the funeral of a chief four horses are sacrificed, and one is set up at each corner of the burial-place. The clothes and other effects of the deceased are burned; and to conclude all, a feast is made of the horses' flesh.<sup>3</sup> The Scythians certainly believed in the existence of the soul after death and in the possibility of turning it to account. This is proved by the practice of one of their tribes, the Taurians of the Crimea, who used to cut off the heads of their prisoners and set them on poles over their houses, especially over the chimneys, in order that the spirits of the slain men might guard the dwellings.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jean du Plan de Carpin, *Historia Mongolorum*, ed. D'Avezac (Paris, 1838), cap. iii. § iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah, texte Arabe accompagné d'une traduction*, par C. Defrémery et B. R. Sanguinetti, iv. 300 sq. For more evidence of similar customs, observed by Turanian peoples, see K. Neumann, *Die Hellenen im Skythenlande* (Berlin, 1855), pp. 237-239.

<sup>3</sup> Captain R. Fitz-roy, *Voyages of His Majesty's Ships "Adventure" and "Beagle,"* ii. 155 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, iv. 103. Many Scythians flayed their dead enemies, and, stretching the skin on a wooden framework, carried it about with them on horseback (Herodotus, iv. 64). The souls of the dead may have been

thought to attend on and serve the man who thus bore their remains about with him. It is also possible that the custom was nothing more than a barbarous mode of wreaking vengeance on the dead. Thus a Persian king has been known to flay an enemy, stuff the skin with chaff, and hang it on a high tree (Procopius, *De bello Persico*, l. 5. 28). This was the treatment which the arch-heretic Manichæus is said to have received at the hands of the Persian king whose son he failed to cure (Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. 22; Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, lxxvii. 137, 139). Still such a punishment may have been suggested by a religious rite. The idea of crucifying their human victims appears to have been suggested to the negroes

The Kayans of Borneo use the skulls of their enemies to ensure the fertility of the ground and of women, the abundance of game, and so forth.

Some of the savages of Borneo allege a similar reason for their favourite custom of taking human heads. "The custom," said a Kayan chief, "is not horrible. It is an ancient custom, a good, beneficent custom, bequeathed to us by our fathers and our fathers' fathers; it brings us blessings, plentiful harvests, and keeps off sickness and pains. Those who were once our enemies, hereby become our guardians, our friends, our benefactors."<sup>1</sup> Thus to convert dead foes into friends and allies all that is necessary is to feed and otherwise propitiate their skulls at a festival when they are brought into the village. "An offering of food is made to the heads, and their spirits, being thus appeased, cease to entertain malice against, or to seek to inflict injury upon, those who have got possession of the skull which formerly adorned the now forsaken body."<sup>2</sup> When the Sea Dyaks of Sarawak return home successful from a head-hunting expedition, they bring the head ashore with much ceremony, wrapt in palm leaves. "On shore and in the village, the head, for months after its arrival, is treated with the greatest consideration, and all the names and terms of endearment of which their language is capable are abundantly lavished on it; the most dainty morsels, culled from their abundant though inelegant repast, are thrust into its mouth, and it is instructed to hate its former friends, and that, having been now adopted into the tribe of its captors, its spirit must be always with them; sirih leaves and betel-nut are given to it, and finally a cigar is frequently placed between its ghastly and pallid lips. None of this disgusting mockery is performed with the intention of ridicule, but all to propitiate the spirit by kindness, and to procure its good wishes for the tribe, of whom it is now supposed to have become a member."<sup>3</sup> Amongst these Dyaks the "Head-Feast," which has been just described, is supposed to be the most beneficial in its influence of all their feasts and ceremonies. "The object of

of Benin by the crucifixes of the early Portuguese missionaries. See H. Ling Roth, *Great Benin* (Halifax, 1903), pp. 14-19.

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Furness, *Home-Life of Borneo Head-Hunters* (Philadelphia, 1902), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*,<sup>2</sup> i. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Low, *Sarawak* (London, 1848), pp. 206-19. In quoting this passage I have taken the liberty to correct a grammatical slip.



them all is to make their rice grow well, to cause the forest to abound with wild animals, to enable their dogs and snares to be successful in securing game, to have the streams swarm with fish, to give health and activity to the people themselves, and to ensure fertility to their women. All these blessings, the possessing and feasting of a fresh head are supposed to be the most efficient means of securing. The very ground itself is believed to be benefited and rendered fertile."<sup>1</sup>

In like manner, if my conjecture is right, the man who represented the father-god of Phrygia used to be slain and his stuffed skin hung on the sacred pine in order that his spirit might work for the growth of the crops, the multiplication of animals, and the fertility of women. So at Athens an ox, which appears to have embodied the corn-spirit, was killed at an annual sacrifice, and its hide, stuffed with straw and sewn up, was afterwards set on its feet and yoked to a plough as if it were ploughing, apparently in order to represent, or rather to promote, the resurrection of the slain corn-spirit at the end of the threshing.<sup>2</sup> This employment of the skins of divine animals for the purpose of ensuring the revival of the slaughtered divinity might be illustrated by other examples.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the hide of the bull which was killed to furnish the regenerating bath of blood in the rites of Attis may have been put to a similar use.

The stuffed skin of the human representatives of the Phrygian god may have been used for like purposes.

<sup>1</sup> Spenser St. John, *op. cit.* i. 204. See further G. A. Wilken, "Iets over de schedelvereering," *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkskunde van Nederlandisch-Indië*, xxxviii. (1889) pp. 89-129. A different view of the purpose of head-hunting is maintained by Mr. A. C. Kruyt, in his essay, "Het koppensnellen der

Toradja's van Midden-Celebes, en zijne Beteekenis," *Verlagen en Mededeelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, Vierde Reeks*, iii. 2 (Amsterdam, 1899), pp. 147 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 294 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 366 sqq.

## CHAPTER VI

### ORIENTAL RELIGIONS IN THE WEST

Popularity  
of the  
worship of  
Cybele and  
Attis in the  
Roman  
Empire.

THE worship of the Great Mother of the Gods and her lover or son was very popular under the Roman Empire. Inscriptions prove that the two received divine honours, separately or conjointly, not only in Italy, and especially at Rome, but also in the provinces, particularly in Africa, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, and Bulgaria.<sup>1</sup> Their worship survived the establishment of Christianity by Constantine; for Symmachus records the recurrence of the festival of the Great Mother,<sup>2</sup> and in the days of Augustine her effeminate priests still paraded the streets and squares of Carthage with whitened faces, scented hair, and mincing gait, while, like the mendicant friars of the Middle Ages, they begged alms from the passers-by.<sup>3</sup> In Greece, on the other hand, the bloody orgies of the Asiatic goddess and her consort appear to have found little favour.<sup>4</sup> The barbarous and cruel character of the worship, with its frantic excesses, was doubtless repugnant to the good taste and humanity of the Greeks, who seem to have preferred the kindred but gentler rites of Adonis. Yet the same features which shocked and repelled the Greeks may have positively

<sup>1</sup> H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 4099, 4100, 4103, 4105, 4106, 4116, 4117, 4119, 4120, 4121, 4123, 4124, 4127, 4128, 4131, 4136, 4139, 4140, 4142, 4156, 4163, 4167; H. Hepding, *Attis*, pp. 85, 86, 93, 94, 95, *Inscr. Nos.* 21-24, 26, 50, 51, 52, 61, 62, 63.

<sup>2</sup> S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*,<sup>2</sup> (London, 1899), p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *De civitate dei*, vii. 26.

<sup>4</sup> But the two were publicly worshipped at Dyme and Patrae in Achaia, (Pausanias, vii. 17. 9, vii. 20. 3), and there was an association for their worship at Piraeus. See P. Foucart, *Des Associations Religieuses chez les Grecs* (Paris, 1873), pp. 85 *seq.*, 196; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 982.



attracted the less refined Romans and barbarians of the West. The ecstatic frenzies, which were mistaken for divine inspiration,<sup>1</sup> the mangling of the body, the theory of a new birth and the remission of sins through the shedding of blood, have all their origin in savagery,<sup>2</sup> and they naturally appealed to peoples in whom the savage instincts were still strong. Their true character was indeed often disguised under a decent veil of allegorical or philosophical interpretation,<sup>3</sup> which probably sufficed to impose upon the rapt and enthusiastic worshippers, reconciling even the more cultivated of them to things which otherwise must have filled them with horror and disgust.

The religion of the Great Mother, with its curious blending of crude savagery with spiritual aspirations, was only one of a multitude of similar Oriental faiths which in the later days of paganism spread over the Roman Empire, and by saturating the European peoples with alien ideals of life gradually undermined the whole fabric of ancient civilisation.<sup>4</sup> Greek and Roman society was built on the

The spread of Oriental faiths over the Roman Empire contributed to undermine the fabric of Greek and Roman civilisation

<sup>1</sup> Rapp, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon der griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 1656.

<sup>2</sup> As to the savage theory of inspiration or possession by a deity see E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 131 sqq. As to the savage theory of a new birth see *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 423 sqq. As to the use of blood to wash away sins see *id.* ii. 211 sqq. Among the Cameroon negroes accidental homicide can be expiated by the blood of an animal. The relations of the slayer and of the slain assemble. An animal is killed and every person present is smeared with its blood on his face and breast. They think that the guilt of manslaughter is thus atoned for, and that no punishment will overtake the homicide. See Missionary Autenrieth, in *Mitteilungen der geographischen Gesellschaft zu Jena*, xii. (1893) pp. 93 sq. In Car Nicobar a man possessed by devils is cleansed of them by being rubbed all over with pig's blood and beaten with leaves. The devils are thus transferred to the leaves, which are thrown into the sea

before daybreak. See V. Solomon, in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 227. Similarly the ancient Greeks purified a homicide by means of pig's blood and laurel leaves. See my note on Pausanias, ii. 31. 8 (vol. iii. pp. 276-279). The original idea of thus purging a manslayer was probably to rid him of the angry ghost of his victim, just as in Car Nicobar a man is rid of devils in the same manner. The purgative virtue ascribed to the blood in these ceremonies may be based on the notion that the offended spirit accepts it as a substitute for the blood of the guilty person. This was the view of C. Meiners (*Geschichte der Religionen*, ii. 137 sq.) and of E. Rohde (*Psyche*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 77 sq.).

<sup>3</sup> A good instance of such an attempt to dress up savagery in the garb of philosophy is the fifth speech of the emperor Julian, "On the Mother of the Gods" (pp. 206 sqq. ed. F. C. Hertlein).

<sup>4</sup> As to the diffusion of Oriental religions in the Roman Empire see G. Boissier, *La Religion Romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*,<sup>2</sup> i. 349 sqq. ; J. Reville, *La Religion à Rome sous les*

by inculcat-  
ing the  
salvation  
of the  
individual  
soul as the  
supreme  
aim of life.

conception of the subordination of the individual to the community, of the citizen to the state; it set the safety of the commonwealth, as the supreme aim of conduct, above the safety of the individual whether in this world or in a world to come. Trained from infancy in this unselfish ideal, the citizens devoted their lives to the public service and were ready to lay them down for the common good; or if they shrank from the supreme sacrifice, it never occurred to them that they acted otherwise than basely in preferring their personal existence to the interests of their country. All this was changed by the spread of Oriental religions which inculcated the commune of the soul with God and its eternal salvation as the only objects worth living for, objects in comparison with which the prosperity and even the existence of the state sank into insignificance. The inevitable result of this selfish and immoral doctrine was to withdraw the devotee more and more from the public service, to concentrate his thoughts on his own spiritual emotions, and to breed in him a contempt for the present life which he regarded merely as a probation for a better and an eternal. The saint and the recluse, disdainful of earth and rapt in ecstatic contemplation of heaven, became in popular opinion the highest ideal of humanity, displacing the old ideal of the patriot and hero who, forgetful of self, lives and is ready to die for the good of his country. The earthly city seemed poor and contemptible to men whose eyes beheld the City of God coming in the clouds of heaven. Thus the centre of gravity, so to say, was shifted from the present to a future life, and however much the other world may have gained, there can be little doubt that this one lost heavily by the change. A general disintegration of the body politic set in. The ties of the state and of the family were loosened: the structure of society tended to resolve itself into its individual elements and thereby to relapse into barbarism; for civilisation is only possible through the active co-operation of the citizens and their willingness to subordinate their private interests to the common good.

*Stoires* (Paris, 1886), pp. 47 sqq.; *Century of the Western Empire*,<sup>3</sup> pp. S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last* 76 sqq.



Men refused to defend their country and even to continue their kind.<sup>1</sup> In their anxiety to save their own souls and the souls of others, they were content to leave the material world, which they identified with the principle of evil, to perish around them. This obsession lasted for a thousand years. The revival of Roman law, of the Aristotelian philosophy, of ancient art and literature at the close of the Middle Ages, marked the return of Europe to native ideals of life and conduct, to saner, manlier views of the world. The long halt in the march of civilisation was over. The tide of Oriental invasion had turned at last. It is ebbing still.<sup>2</sup>

Among the gods of eastern origin who in the decline of the ancient world competed against each other for the allegiance of the West was the old Persian deity Mithra. The immense popularity of his worship is attested by the monuments illustrative of it which have been found scattered in profusion all over the Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup> In respect both of doctrines and of rites the cult of Mithra appears to have presented many points of resemblance not only to the religion of the Mother of the Gods<sup>4</sup> but also to Christianity.<sup>5</sup> The similarity struck the Christian doctors themselves and was explained by them as a work of the devil, who sought to seduce the souls of men from the true faith by a false and insidious imitation of it.<sup>6</sup> So to the Spanish con-

Popularity of the worship of Mithra; its resemblance to Christianity and its rivalry with that religion.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* ii. 604, vi. 661; G. Boissier, *La Religion Romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*,<sup>b</sup> i. 357 sq.; E. Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, i. 345 sq.; H. H. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*,<sup>4</sup> i. 150-153, ii. 90.

<sup>2</sup> To prevent misapprehension I will add that the spread of Oriental religions was only one of many causes which contributed to the downfall of ancient civilisation. Among these contributory causes a friend, for whose judgment and learning I entertain the highest respect, counts bad government and a ruinous fiscal system, two of the most powerful agents to blast the prosperity of nations, as may be seen in our own day by the blight which has struck the Turkish empire. It is probable, too, as my friend thinks, that the rapid diffusion

of alien faiths was as much an effect as a cause of widespread intellectual decay. Such unwholesome growths could hardly have fastened upon the Graeco-Roman mind in the days of its full vigour. We may remember the energy with which the Roman Government combated the first outbreak of the Bacchic plague (Th. Mommsen, *Roman History*, iii. 115 sq., ed. 1894).

<sup>3</sup> See Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra* (Brussels, 1896-1899); *id.*, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 3028 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 333 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> E. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 576 sqq.; Fr. Cumont, *op. cit.* i. 339 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian, *De corona*, 15; *id.*, *De*

querors of Mexico and Peru many of the native heathen rites appeared to be diabolical counterfeits of the Christian sacraments.<sup>1</sup> With more probability the modern student of comparative religion traces such resemblances to the similar and independent workings of the mind of man in his sincere, if crude, attempts to fathom the secret of the universe, and to adjust his little life to its awful mysteries. However that may be, there can be no doubt that the Mithraic religion proved a formidable rival to Christianity, combining as it did a solemn ritual with aspirations after moral purity and a hope of immortality.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the issue of the conflict between the two faiths appears for a time to have hung in the balance.<sup>3</sup> An instructive relic of the long struggle is preserved in our festival of Christmas, which the Church seems to have borrowed directly from its heathen rival. In the Julian calendar the twenty-fifth of December was reckoned the winter solstice,<sup>4</sup> and it was regarded as the Nativity of the Sun, because the day begins to lengthen and the power of the sun to increase from that turning-point of the year.<sup>5</sup> If we may trust the evidence of an obscure scholiast the Greeks used to celebrate the birth of the luminary at that time by a midnight service, coming out of the inner shrines and crying, "The Virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing!"<sup>6</sup> Now Mithra was regularly identified by his worshippers with the Sun, the Unconquered

The festival of Christmas borrowed by the Church from the religion of Mithra.

*praescriptions haereticorum*, 40; Justin Martyr, *Apologia*, i. 66; *id.*, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 78 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, vi. 429, 660). Tertullian explained in like manner the resemblance of the fasts of Isis and Cybele to the fasts of Christianity (*De jejuniis*, 16).

<sup>1</sup> J. de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, bk. v. chs. 11, 16, 17, 18, 24-28.

<sup>2</sup> Compare S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 80 *sqq.*; *id.*, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, pp. 619 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> E. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 579 *sq.*; Fr. Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, i. 338.

<sup>4</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 221;

Columella, *De re rustica*, ix. 14. 12; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, ii. 124; G. F. Unger, in Iwan Müller's *Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, i.<sup>1</sup> 649.

<sup>5</sup> In the calendar of Philocalus the twenty-fifth of December is marked *N. Invicti*, that is, *Natalis Solis Invicti*. See *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> p. 278, with Th. Mommsen's commentary, pp. 338 *sq.*

<sup>6</sup> C. A. Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, ii. 1227, note<sup>2</sup>, quoting Schol. Gregor. Bodlej. p. 43, τὰς τῆς ἱερῆς Ἑλληνες ἡγόν ἐφημερίαν ἐκπαλαι καθ' ἣν ἐτέχθη Χριστὸς ἡμέραν αἰξίφωτον καλοῦντες. ἐτελοῦντο δὲ κατὰ τὸ μεσονύκτιον ἀδούτοις ὑπεισπρόμενοι, ὁδὸν ἐξόντες ἐπαύον ἢ παρθένοι τέκεον, αἶψα φῶς.



Sun, as they called him;<sup>1</sup> hence his nativity also fell on the twenty-fifth of December.<sup>2</sup> The Gospels say nothing as to the day of Christ's birth, and accordingly the early Church did not celebrate it. In time, however, the Christians of Egypt came to regard the sixth of January as the date of the Nativity, and the custom of commemorating the birth of the Saviour on that day gradually spread until by the fourth century it was universally established in the East. But at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century the Western Church, which had never recognised the sixth of January as the day of the Nativity, adopted the twenty-fifth of December as the true date, and in time its decision was accepted also by the Eastern Church. At Antioch the change was not introduced till about the year 375 A.D.<sup>3</sup>

What considerations led the ecclesiastical authorities to institute the festival of Christmas? The motives for the innovation are stated with great frankness by a Syrian writer, himself a Christian. "The reason," he tells us, "why the fathers transferred the celebration of the sixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December was this. It was a custom of the heathen to celebrate on the same twenty-fifth of December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians also took part. Accordingly when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnised on that day and the festival of the Epiphany on the sixth of January. Accordingly, along with this custom, the practice has prevailed of kindling fires till the sixth."<sup>4</sup> The heathen origin

Motives  
for the in-  
stitution of  
Christmas.

<sup>1</sup> Dedications to Mithra the Unconquered Sun (*Soli invicto Mithrae*) have been found in abundance. See Fr. Cumont, *op. cit.* ii. 99 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Cumont, *op. cit.* i. 325 sq., 339.

<sup>3</sup> J. Bingham, *The Antiquities of the Christian Church*, bk. xx. ch. iv. (Bingham's *Works*, vol. vii. pp. 279 sqq., Oxford, 1855); C. A. Credner, "De natalitiorum Christi origine," *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*,

iii. 2 (1833), pp. 236 sqq.; Mgr. L. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*,<sup>3</sup> i. 257 sqq.; Th. Mommsen, in *Corpus Inscript. Lat.* i.<sup>2</sup> 338. The earliest mention of the festival of Christmas is in the calendar of Philocalus, which was drawn up at Rome in 336 A.D. The words are *VIII. kal. jan., natus Christus in Betleem Judae* (L. Duchesne, *op. cit.* p. 258).

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by C. A. Credner, *op. cit.* p. 239, note 46, and by Th. Mommsen,

of Christmas is plainly hinted at, if not tacitly admitted, by Augustine when he exhorts his Christian brethren not to celebrate that solemn day like the heathen on account of the sun, but on account of him who made the sun.<sup>1</sup> In like manner Leo the Great rebuked the pestilent belief that Christmas was solemnised because of the birth of the new sun, as it was called, and not because of the nativity of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The Easter celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ appears to have been influenced by the similar celebration of the death and resurrection of Attis, which was held at Rome at the same season.

Thus it appears that the Christian Church chose to celebrate the birthday of its Founder on the twenty-fifth of December in order to transfer the devotion of the heathen from the Sun to him who was called the Sun of Righteousness.<sup>3</sup> If that was so, there can be no intrinsic improbability in the conjecture that motives of the same sort may have led the ecclesiastical authorities to assimilate the Easter festival of the death and resurrection of their Lord to the festival of the death and resurrection of another Asiatic god which fell at the same season. Now the Easter rites still observed in Greece, Sicily, and Southern Italy bear in some respects a striking resemblance to the rites of Adonis, and I have suggested that the Church may have consciously adapted the new festival to its heathen prede-

*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> 338 sq.

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *Serm. cxc. 1* (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xxxviii. 1007).

<sup>2</sup> Leo the Great, *Serm. xxii. (al. xxi.) 6* (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, liv. 198). Compare St. Ambrose, *Serm. vi. 1* (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xvii. 614).

<sup>3</sup> A. Credner, *op. cit.* pp. 236 sqq.; E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 297 sq.; Fr. Cumont, *op. cit.* i. 342, 355 sq.; Th. Mommsen, in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> 338 sq. A different explanation of Christmas has been put forward by Mgr Duchesne. He shows that among the early Christians the death of Christ was commonly supposed to have fallen on the twenty-fifth of March, that day having been "chosen arbitrarily, or rather suggested by its coincidence with the official equinox of spring." It would be natural to assume that Christ had lived an exact number of

years on earth, and therefore that his incarnation as well as his death took place on the twenty-fifth of March. In point of fact the Church has placed the Annunciation and with it the beginning of his mother's pregnancy on that very day. If that were so, his birth would in the course of nature have occurred nine months later, that is, on the twenty-fifth of December. Thus on Mgr Duchesne's theory the date of the Nativity was obtained by inference from the date of the Crucifixion, which in its turn was chosen because it coincided with the official equinox of spring. Mgr Duchesne does not notice the coincidence of the vernal equinox with the festival of Attis. See his work *Origines du Culte Chrétien*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 261-265, 272. The tradition that both the conception and the death of Christ fell on the twenty-fifth of March is mentioned and apparently accepted by Augustine (*De Trinitate*, iv. 9, Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, xlii. 894).



cessor for the sake of winning souls to Christ.<sup>1</sup> But this adaptation probably took place in the Greek-speaking rather than in the Latin-speaking parts of the ancient world; for the worship of Adonis, while it flourished among the Greeks, appears to have made little impression on Rome and the West.<sup>2</sup> Certainly it never formed part of the official Roman religion. The place which it might have taken in the affections of the vulgar was already occupied by the similar but more barbarous worship of Attis and the Great Mother. Now the death and resurrection of Attis were officially celebrated at Rome on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of March,<sup>3</sup> the latter being regarded as the spring equinox,<sup>4</sup> and therefore as the most appropriate day for the revival of a god of vegetation who had been dead or sleeping throughout the winter. But according to an ancient and widespread tradition Christ suffered on the twenty-fifth of March, and accordingly some Christians regularly celebrated the Crucifixion on that day without any regard to the state of the moon. This custom was certainly observed in Phrygia, Cappadocia, and Gaul, and there seem to be grounds for thinking that at one time it was followed also in Rome.<sup>5</sup> Thus the tradition which

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> However, the lament for Adonis is mentioned by Ovid (*Art. Amat.* i. 75 sq.) along with the Jewish observance of the Sabbath.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 223 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Columella, *De re rustica*, ix. 14. 1; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 246; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 21. 10; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, ii. 124.

<sup>5</sup> Mgr L. Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chrétien*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 262 sq. That Christ was crucified on the twenty-fifth of March in the year 29 is expressly affirmed by Tertullian (*Adversus Iudaeos*, 8, vol. ii. p. 719 ed. F. Oehler), Hippolytus (*Commentary on Daniel*, iv. 23, vol. i. p. 242 ed. Bonwetsch and Achelis), and Augustine (*De civitate Dei*, xviii. 54; *id.*, *De Trinitate*, iv. 9). The Quartodecimans of Phrygia celebrated the twenty-fifth of March as the day of Christ's death, quoting as their authority certain

acts of Pilate; in Cappadocia the adherents of this sect were divided between the twenty-fifth of March and the fourteenth of the moon. See Epiphanius, *Adversus Haeres.* i. 1 (vol. ii. p. 447, ed. G. Dindorf; Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, xli. 884 sq.). In Gaul the death and resurrection of Christ were regularly celebrated on the twenty-fifth and twenty-seventh of March as late as the sixth century. See Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, viii. 31. 6 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, lxxi. 566); S. Martinus Dumiensis (bishop of Braga), *De Pascha*, 1 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, lxxii. 50), who says: "*A plerisque Gallicanis episcopis usque ante non multum tempus custoditum est, ut semper VIII. Kal. April. diem Paschae celebrent, in quo facta Christi resurrectio traditur.*" According to this last testimony, it was the resurrection, not the crucifixion, of Christ that was celebrated on the twenty-fifth of March; but Mgr Duchesne attributes

placed the death of Christ on the twenty-fifth of March was ancient and deeply rooted. It is all the more remarkable because astronomical considerations prove that it can have had no historical foundation.<sup>1</sup> The inference appears to be inevitable that the passion of Christ must have been arbitrarily referred to that date in order to harmonise with an older festival of the spring equinox. This is the view of the learned ecclesiastical historian Mgr Duchesne, who points out that the death of the Saviour was thus made to fall upon the very day on which, according to a widespread belief, the world had been created.<sup>2</sup> But the resurrection of Attis, who combined in himself the characters of the divine Father and the divine Son,<sup>3</sup> was officially celebrated at Rome on the same day. When we remember that the festival of St. George in April has replaced the ancient pagan festival of the Parilia;<sup>4</sup> that the festival of St. John the Baptist in June has succeeded to a heathen Midsummer festival of water;<sup>5</sup> that the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin in August has ousted the festival of Diana;<sup>6</sup> that the feast of All Souls in November is a

Heathen  
festivals  
displaced  
by  
Christian.

the statement to a mistake of the writer. With regard to the Roman practice the twenty-fifth and twenty-seventh of March are marked in ancient Martyrologies as the dates of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. See *Vetusius Occidentalis Ecclesiae Martyrologium*, ed. Franciscus Maria Florentinus (Lucca, 1667), pp. 396 sq., 405 sq. On this subject Mgr Duchesne observes: "Hippolytus, in his Paschal Table, marks the Passion of Christ in a year in which the fourteenth of Nisan falls on Friday twenty-fifth March. In his commentary on Daniel he expressly indicates Friday the twenty-fifth of March and the consulship of the two Gemini. The Philocalien Catalogue of the Popes gives the same date as to day and year. It is to be noted that the cycle of Hippolytus and the Philocalien Catalogue are derived from official documents, and may be cited as evidence of the Roman ecclesiastical usage" (*Origines du Culte Chrétien*,<sup>7</sup> p. 262).

<sup>1</sup> Mgr L. Duchesne, *op. cit.* p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> Mgr L. Duchesne, *loc. cit.* A sect of the Montanists held that the world began and that the sun and moon were created at the spring equinox, which, however, they dated on the twenty-fourth of March (Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vii. 18). At Heneh-Su in Egypt there was celebrated a festival of the "hanging out of the heavens," that is, the supposed reconstituting of the heavens each year in the spring (E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 63). But the Egyptians thought that the creation of the world took place at the rising of Sirius (Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 24; Solinus, xxxii. 13), which in antiquity fell on the twentieth of July (L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 127 sqq.).

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 219, 235 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> The evidence of this will be given in the third edition of *The Golden Bough*.

<sup>5</sup> Above, pp. 203 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> J. G. Frazer, *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 18-21.



continuation of an old heathen feast of the dead;<sup>1</sup> and that the Nativity of Christ himself was assigned to the winter solstice in December because that day was deemed the Nativity of the Sun;<sup>2</sup> we can hardly be thought rash or unreasonable in conjecturing that the other cardinal festival of the Christian church—the solemnisation of Easter—may have been in like manner, and from like motives of edification, adapted to a similar celebration of the Phrygian god Attis at the vernal equinox.<sup>3</sup> At least it is a remarkable coincidence, if it is nothing more, that the Christian and the heathen festivals of the divine death and resurrection should have been solemnised at the same season and in the same places. For the places which celebrated the death of Christ at the spring equinox were Phrygia, Gaul, and apparently Rome, that is, the very regions in which the worship of Attis either originated or struck deepest root. It is difficult to regard the coincidence as purely accidental. If the vernal equinox, the season at which in the temperate regions the whole face of nature testifies to a fresh outburst of vital energy, had been viewed from of old as the time when the world was annually created afresh in the resurrection of a god, nothing could be more natural than to place the resurrection of the new deity at the same cardinal point of the year. Only it is to be observed that if the death of Christ was dated on the twenty-fifth of March, his resurrection, according to Christian tradition, must have happened on the twenty-seventh of March, which is just two days later than the vernal equinox of the Julian calendar and the resurrection of Attis. A similar displacement of two days in the adjustment of Christian to heathen celebrations occurs in the festivals of St. George and the Assumption of the Virgin. However,

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 301 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Above, pp. 254 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> Another instance of the substitution of a Christian for a pagan festival may be mentioned. On the first of August the people of Alexandria used to commemorate the defeat of Mark Antony by Augustus and the entrance of the victor into their city. The

heathen pomp of the festival offended Eudoxia, wife of Theodosius the Younger, and she decreed that on that day the Alexandrians should thenceforth celebrate the deliverance of St. Peter from prison instead of the deliverance of their city from the yoke of Antony and Cleopatra. See L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, I. 154.

another Christian tradition, followed by Lactantius and perhaps by the practice of the Church in Gaul, placed the death of Christ on the twenty-third and his resurrection on the twenty-fifth of March.<sup>1</sup> If that was so, his resurrection coincided exactly with the resurrection of Attis.

Com-  
promise of  
Christi-  
anity with  
paganism.

Taken altogether, the coincidences of the Christian with the heathen festivals are too close and too numerous to be accidental. They mark the compromise which the Church in the hour of its triumph was compelled to make with its vanquished yet still dangerous rivals. The inflexible Protestantism of the primitive missionaries, with their fiery denunciations of heathendom, had been exchanged for the supple policy, the easy tolerance, the comprehensive charity of shrewd ecclesiastics, who clearly perceived that if Christianity was to conquer the world it could do so only by relaxing the too rigid principles of its Founder, by widening a little the narrow gate which leads to salvation. In this respect an instructive parallel might be drawn between the history of Christianity and the history of Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> Both systems were in their origin essentially ethical reforms born of the generous ardour, the lofty aspirations, the tender compassion of their noble Founders, two of those beautiful spirits who appear at rare intervals on earth like beings come from a better world to support and guide our weak and erring nature.<sup>3</sup> Both preached moral virtue as the means of accomplishing what they regarded as the supreme object of life, the eternal salvation of the individual soul, though by a curious antithesis the one sought that salvation in a blissful eternity,

Parallel  
with  
Buddhism.

<sup>1</sup> Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 2; *id.*, *Divin. Institut.* iv. 10. 18. As to the evidence of the Gallic usage see S. Martinus Dumienis, quoted above, p. 257, note 5.

<sup>2</sup> On the decadence of Buddhism and its gradual assimilation to those popular Oriental superstitions against which it was at first directed, see Monier Williams, *Buddhism* (London, 1890), pp. 147-199.

<sup>3</sup> The historical reality both of Buddha and of Christ has sometimes been doubted or denied. It would be just as reasonable to question the

historical existence of Alexander the Great and Charlemagne on account of the legends which have gathered round them. The great religious movements which have stirred humanity to its depths and altered the beliefs of nations spring ultimately from the conscious and deliberate efforts of extraordinary minds, not from the blind unconscious co-operation of the multitude. The attempt to explain history without the influence of great men may flatter the vanity of the vulgar, but it will find no favour with the philosophic historian.



the other in a final release from suffering, in annihilation. But the austere ideals of sanctity which they inculcated were too deeply opposed not only to the frailties but to the natural instincts of humanity ever to be carried out in practice by more than a small number of disciples, who consistently renounced the ties of the family and the state in order to work out their own salvation in the still seclusion of the cloister. If such faiths were to be nominally accepted by whole nations or even by the world, it was essential that they should first be modified or transformed so as to accord in some measure with the prejudices, the passions, the superstitions of the vulgar. This process of accommodation was carried out in after-ages by followers who, made of less ethereal stuff than their masters, were for that reason the better fitted to mediate between them and the common herd. Thus as time went on, the two religions, in exact proportion to their growing popularity, absorbed more and more of those baser elements which they had been instituted for the very purpose of suppressing. Such spiritual decadences are inevitable. The world cannot live at the level of its great men. Yet it would be unfair to the generality of our kind to ascribe wholly to their intellectual and moral weakness the gradual divergence of Buddhism and Christianity from their primitive patterns. For it should never be forgotten that by their glorification of poverty and celibacy both these religions struck straight at the root not merely of civil society but of human existence. The blow was parried by the wisdom or the folly of the vast majority of mankind, who refused to purchase a chance of saving their souls with the certainty of extinguishing the species.

## CHAPTER VII

### HYACINTH

The Greek Hyacinth interpreted as the vegetation which blooms and withers away.

ANOTHER mythical being who has been supposed to belong to the class of gods here discussed is Hyacinth. He too has been interpreted as the vegetation which blooms in spring and withers under the scorching heat of the summer sun.<sup>1</sup> Though he belongs to Greek, not to Oriental mythology, some account of him may not be out of place in the present discussion. According to the legend, Hyacinth was the youngest and handsomest son of the ancient king Amyclas, who had his capital at Amyclae in the beautiful vale of Sparta. One day playing at quoits with Apollo, he was accidentally killed by a blow of the god's quoit. Bitterly the god lamented the death of his friend. The hyacinth—"that sanguine flower inscribed with woe"—sprang from the blood of the hapless youth, as anemones and roses from the blood of Adonis, and violets from the blood of Attis:<sup>2</sup> like these vernal flowers it heralded the advent of another spring and gladdened the hearts of men with the promise of a joyful resurrection. The flower is usually supposed to be not what we call a hyacinth, but a little purple iris with the letters of lamentation (AI, which in Greek means "alas") clearly inscribed in black on its petals. In Greece it blooms in spring after the early violets but

<sup>1</sup> G. F. Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 473; L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, i.<sup>4</sup> 248 sq.; Greve, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. rom. Myth.* i. 2763 sq. Other views of Hyacinth have been expressed by G. F. Welcker (*Griechische Götterlehre*, i. 472), G. F. Unger (*Philologus*, xxxvii. (1877) pp. 20 sqq.),

E. Rohde (*Psyche*,<sup>3</sup> i. 137 sqq.) and S. Wide (*Lakonische Kulte*, p. 290).

<sup>2</sup> Apollodorus, i. 3. 3, iii. 10. 3; Nicander, *Ther.* 901 sqq., with the Schollast's note; Lucian, *De saltatione*, 45; Pausanias, iii. 1. 3, iii. 19. 5; J. Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, i. 241 sqq.; Ovid, *Metam.* x. 161-219; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxi. 66.



before the roses.<sup>1</sup> One spring, when the hyacinths were in bloom, it happened that the red-coated Spartan regiments lay encamped under the walls of Corinth. Their commander gave the Amyclaeon battalion leave to go home and celebrate as usual the festival of Hyacinth in their native town. But the sad flower was to be to these men an omen of death; for they had not gone far before they were enveloped by clouds of light-armed foes and cut to pieces.<sup>2</sup>

The tomb of Hyacinth was at Amyclae under a massive altar-like pedestal, which supported an archaic bronze image of Apollo. In the left side of the pedestal was a bronze door, and through it offerings were passed to Hyacinth, as to a hero or a dead man, not as to a god, before sacrifices were offered to Apollo at the annual Hyacinthian festival. Bas-reliefs carved on the pedestal represented Hyacinth and his maiden sister Polyboea caught up to heaven by a company of goddesses.<sup>3</sup> The annual festival of the Hyacinthia was held in the month of Hecatombeus, which seems to have corresponded to May.<sup>4</sup> The ceremonies

The tomb and the festival of Hyacinth at Amyclae.

<sup>1</sup> Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.* vi. 8. 1 sq. That the hyacinth was a spring flower is plainly indicated also by Philostratus (*Imag.* i. 23. 4) and Ovid (*Metam.* x. 162-166). See further Greve, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. 2764; J. Murr, *Die Pflanzenwelt in der griechischen Mythologie* (Innsbruck, 1890), pp. 257 sqq.; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, pp. 383 sq. Miss J. E. Harrison was so kind as to present me with two specimens of the flower (*Delphinium Ajacis*) on which the woful letters were plainly visible. A flower similarly marked, of a colour between white and red, was associated with the death of Ajax (Pausanias, i. 35. 4). But usually the two flowers were thought to be the same (Ovid, *Metam.* xiii. 394 sqq.; Scholiast on Theocritus, x. 28; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxi. 66; Eustathius on Homer, *Iliad*, ii. 557, p. 285).

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, iv. 5. 7-17; Pausanias, iii. 10. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias, iii. 1. 3, iii. 19. 1-5.

<sup>4</sup> Hesychius, s.v. *Βαυροπέβης*; G. F. Unger in *Philologus*, xxvii. (1877)

pp. 13-33; Greve, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, i. 2762; W. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*,<sup>3</sup> i. 339. From Xenophon (*Hellenica*, iv. 5) we learn that in 390 B.C. the Hyacinthian festival followed soon after the Isthmian festival, which that year fell in spring. Others, however, identifying Hecatombeus with the Attic month Hecatombeon, would place the Hyacinthia in July (K. O. Müller, *Derier*,<sup>2</sup> i. 358). In Rhodes, Cos, and other Greek states there was a month called Hyacinthia, which probably took its name from the Hyacinthian festival. The month is thought to correspond to the Athenian Scirophorion and therefore to June. See E. Bichsel, "De fastis Graecorum antiquioribus," *Leipziger Studien für klassische Philologie*, vii. (1884) pp. 369 sq., 381, 384, 410, 414 sq.; Dittenberger, *Syllage Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>3</sup> Nos. 614, note 3, 744, note 1. If this latter identification of the month is correct, it would furnish an argument for dating the Spartan festival of Hyacinth in June also. The question is too intricate to be discussed here.

occupied three days. On the first the people mourned for Hyacinth, wearing no wreaths, singing no paeans, eating no bread, and behaving with great gravity. It was on this day probably that the offerings were made at Hyacinth's tomb. Next day the scene was changed. All was joy and bustle. The capital was emptied of its inhabitants, who poured out in their thousands to witness and share the festivities at Amyclae. Boys in high-girt tunics sang hymns in honour of the god to the accompaniment of flutes and lyres. Others, splendidly attired, paraded on horseback in the theatre: choirs of youths chanted their native ditties: dancers danced: maidens rode in wicker carriages or went in procession to witness the chariot races: sacrifices were offered in profusion: the citizens feasted their friends and even their slaves.<sup>1</sup> This outburst of gaiety may be supposed to have celebrated the resurrection of Hyacinth and perhaps also his ascension to heaven, which, as we have seen, was represented on his tomb. However, it may be that the ascension took place on the third day of the festival; but as to that we know nothing. The sister who went to heaven with him was by some identified with Artemis or Proserpine.<sup>2</sup>

Hyacinth  
an  
aboriginal  
god,  
perhaps  
a king,  
who was  
worshipped  
in Laconia  
before the  
invasion  
of the  
Dorians.

It is highly probable, as Erwin Rohde perceived,<sup>3</sup> that Hyacinth was an old aboriginal deity of the underworld who had been worshipped at Amyclae long before the Dorians invaded and conquered the country. If that was so, the story of his relation to Apollo must have been a comparatively late invention, an attempt of the newcomers to fit the ancient god of the land into their own mythical system, in order that he might extend his protection to them. On this theory it may not be without significance that sacrifices at the festival were offered to Hyacinth, as to a hero, before they were offered to Apollo.<sup>4</sup> Further, on

<sup>1</sup> Athenaeus, iv. 17, pp. 139 sq. Strabo speaks (vi. 3. 2, p. 278) of a contest at the Hyacinthian festival. It may have been the chariot-races mentioned by Athenaeus.

<sup>2</sup> Hesychius, s.v. Πολύδωρα.

<sup>3</sup> E. Rohde, *Psyche*,<sup>2</sup> i. 137 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Pausanias, iii. 19. 3. The Greek word here used for sacrifice (*θυσία*)

properly denotes sacrifices offered to the heroic or worshipful dead; another word (*θύσις*) was employed for sacrifices offered to gods. The two terms are distinguished by Pausanias here and elsewhere (ii. 10. 1, ii. 11. 7). Compare Herodotus, ii. 44. Sacrifices to the worshipful dead were often annual. See Pausanias, iii. 1. 8, vii. 19. 10,



the analogy of similar deities elsewhere, we should expect to find Hyacinth coupled, not with a male friend, but with a female consort. That consort may perhaps be detected in his sister Polyboea, who ascended to heaven with him. The new myth, if new it was, of the love of Apollo for Hyacinth would involve a changed conception of the aboriginal god, which in its turn must have affected that of his spouse. For when Hyacinth came to be thought of as young and unmarried there was no longer room in his story for a wife, and she would have to be disposed of in some other way. What was easier for the myth-maker than to turn her into his unmarried sister? However we may explain it, a change seems certainly to have come over the popular idea of Hyacinth; for whereas on his tomb he was portrayed as a bearded man, later art represented him as the pink of youthful beauty.<sup>1</sup> But it is perhaps needless to suppose that the sisterly relation of Polyboea to him was a late modification of the myth. The stories of Cronus and Rhea, of Zeus and Hera, of Osiris and Isis, remind us that in old days gods, like kings, often married their sisters, and probably for the same reason, namely, to ensure their own title to the throne under a rule of female kinship which treated women and not men as the channel in which the blood royal flowed.<sup>2</sup> It is not impossible that Hyacinth may have been a divine king who actually reigned in his lifetime at Amyclae and was afterwards worshipped at his tomb. The representation of his triumphal ascent to heaven in company with his sister suggests that, like Adonis and Proserpine, he may have been supposed to spend one part of the year in the under-world of darkness and death, and another part in the upper-world of light and life. And as the anemones and the sprouting corn marked the return of Adonis and Proserpine, so the flowers to which he gave his name may have heralded the ascension of Hyacinth.

His sister  
Polyboea  
may  
perhaps  
have been  
his spouse.

vii. 20. 9, viii. 14. 11, viii. 41. 1, ix. 38. 5, x. 24. 6. It has been observed by E. Rohde (*Psyche*,<sup>3</sup> i. 139, note 2) that sacrifices were frequently offered to a hero before a god, and he suggests with much probability that in these

cases the worship of the hero was older than that of the deity.

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, iii. 19. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 39, and below, pp. 396 sq.





BOOK THIRD  
OSIRIS





## CHAPTER I

### THE MYTH OF OSIRIS

IN ancient Egypt the god whose death and resurrection were annually celebrated with alternate sorrow and joy was Osiris, the most popular of all Egyptian deities; and there are good grounds for classing him with Adonis and Attis as a personification of the great yearly vicissitudes of nature, especially of the corn. But the immense vogue which he enjoyed for many ages induced his devoted worshippers to heap upon him the attributes and powers of many other gods; so that it is not always easy to strip him, so to say, of his borrowed plumes and to restore them to their proper owners. In the following pages I do not pretend to enumerate and analyse all the alien elements which thus gathered round the popular deity. All that I shall attempt to do is to peel off these accretions and to exhibit the god, as far as possible, in his primitive simplicity. The discoveries of recent years in Egypt enable us to do so with more confidence now than when I first addressed myself to the problem some seventeen years ago.

Osiris the Egyptian counterpart of Adonis and Attis.

The myth of Osiris is told in a connected form only by Plutarch, whose narrative has been confirmed and to some extent amplified in modern times by the evidence of the monuments.<sup>1</sup> The story runs thus.

The myth of Osiris.

Osiris was the offspring of an intrigue between the

<sup>1</sup> See Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 12-20; R. V. Lantzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 692-199; A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 365-369; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion* (Berlin, 1905), pp.

34-38; A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, pp. 109-199; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 172-199; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* (London, 1904), ii. 123-199.

Osiris a  
son of the  
earth-god  
and the  
sky-  
goddess.

earth-god Seb (Keb or Geb, as the name is sometimes transliterated) and the sky-goddess Nut. The Greeks identified his parents with their own deities Cronus and Rhea. When the sun-god Ra perceived that his wife Nut had been unfaithful to him, he declared with a curse that she should be delivered of the child in no month and no year. But the goddess had another lover, the god Thoth or Hermes, as the Greeks called him, and he playing at draughts with the moon won from her a seventy-second part<sup>1</sup> of every day, and having compounded five whole days out of these parts he added them to the Egyptian year of three hundred and sixty days. This was the mythical origin of the five supplementary days which the Egyptians annually inserted at the end of every year in order to establish a harmony between lunar and solar time.<sup>2</sup> On these five days, regarded as outside the year of twelve months, the curse of the sun-god did not rest, and accordingly Osiris was born on the first of them. At his nativity a voice rang out proclaiming that the Lord of All had come into the world. Some say that a certain Pamytes heard a voice from the temple at Thebes bidding him announce with a shout that a great king, the beneficent Osiris, was born. But Osiris was not the only child of his mother. On the second of the supplementary days she gave birth to the elder Horus, on the third to the god Set, whom the Greeks called Typhon, on the fourth to the goddess Isis, and on the fifth to the goddess Nephthys.<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Set married his sister Nephthys, and Osiris married his sister Isis.

Osiris  
introduces  
the  
cultivation  
of corn and  
of the vine.

Reigning as a king on earth, Osiris reclaimed the Egyptians from savagery, gave them laws, and taught them to worship the gods. Before his time the Egyptians had been cannibals. But Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris, discovered wheat and barley growing wild, and Osiris introduced the cultivation of these grains amongst his people,

<sup>1</sup> In Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 12, we must clearly read ἰβδουακοερίε βεβρεπαρ with Scaliger and Wyttenbach for the ἰβδουακοερίε of the MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, ii. 4, with A. Wiedemann's note; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 94 sqq.; A. Erman, *Aegypten*

*und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 468 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 208 sq.

<sup>3</sup> The birth of the five deities on the five supplementary days is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus (i. 13. 4) as well as by Plutarch (*Isis et Osiris*, 12).



who forthwith abandoned cannibalism and took kindly to a corn diet. Moreover, Osiris is said to have been the first to gather fruit from trees, to train the vine to poles, and to tread the grapes. Eager to communicate these beneficent discoveries to all mankind, he committed the whole government of Egypt to his wife Isis, and travelled over the world, diffusing the blessings of civilisation wherever he went.<sup>1</sup> But on his return his brother Set (whom the Greeks called Typhon) with seventy-two others plotted against him. Having taken the measure of his good brother's body by stealth, the bad brother Typhon fashioned and highly decorated a coffer of the same size, and once when they were all drinking and making merry he brought in the coffer and jestingly promised to give it to the one whom it should fit exactly. Well, they all tried one after the other, but it fitted none of them. Last of all Osiris stepped into it and lay down. On that the conspirators ran and slammed the lid down on him, nailed it fast, soldered it with molten lead, and flung the coffer into the Nile. This happened on the seventeenth day of the month Athyr, when the sun is in the sign of the Scorpion, and in the eight-and-twentieth year of the reign or the life of Osiris. When Isis heard of it she sheared off a lock of her hair, put on mourning attire, and wandered disconsolately up and down, seeking the body.<sup>2</sup>

His violent death.

Isis searches for his body.

By the advice of the god of wisdom she took refuge in the papyrus swamps of the Delta. Seven scorpions accompanied her in her flight. One evening when she was weary she came to the house of a woman, who, alarmed at the sight of the scorpions, shut the door in her face. Then one of the scorpions crept under the door and stung the child of the woman that he died. But when Isis heard the mother's lamentation, her heart was touched, and she laid her hands on the child and uttered her powerful spells; so the poison was driven out of the child and he lived. Afterwards Isis herself gave birth to a son in the swamps. The infant was the younger Horus, and Buto, the goddess of the north, hid him from the wrath of his wicked uncle Set. Yet she could not guard him from all mishap;

Isis and her infant son Horus.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 13; Diodorus Siculus, i. 14 and 17; Tibullus,

i. 7. 29 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 13 sq.

for one day when Isis came to her little son's hiding-place she found him stretched lifeless and rigid on the ground: a scorpion had stung him. Then Isis prayed to the sun-god Ra for help, and he hearkened to her and sent Thoth, who by his words of power restored the child to life.<sup>1</sup>

The body  
of Osiris  
floats to  
Byblus,  
where it is  
recovered  
by Isis.

Meantime the coffer containing the body of Osiris had floated down the river and away out to sea, till at last it drifted ashore at Byblus, on the coast of Syria. Here a fine *erica*-tree shot up suddenly and enclosed the chest in its trunk. The king of the country, admiring the growth of the tree, had it cut down and made into a pillar of his house; but he did not know that the coffer with the dead Osiris was in it. Word of this came to Isis and she journeyed to Byblus, and sat down by the well, in humble guise, her face wet with tears. To none would she speak till the king's handmaidens came, and then she greeted kindly and braided their hair and breathed on them from her own divine body a wondrous perfume. But when the queen beheld the braids of her handmaidens' hair and smelt the sweet smell that emanated from them, she sent for the stranger woman and took her into her house and made her the nurse of her child. But Isis gave the babe her finger instead of her breast to suck, and at night she began to burn all that was mortal of him away, while she herself in the likeness of a swallow fluttered round the pillar that contained her dead brother, twittering mournfully. But the queen spied what she was doing and shrieked out when she saw her child in flames, and thereby she hindered him from becoming immortal. Then the goddess revealed herself and begged for the pillar of the roof, and they gave it her, and she cut the coffer out of it, and fell upon it and embraced it and lamented so loud that the younger of the king's children died of fright on the spot. But the trunk of the tree she wrapped in fine linen and poured ointment on it and gave it to the king and queen, and the wood stands in a temple of Isis and is worshipped by the people of Byblus to this day. And Isis put the coffer in a boat and took the eldest of

<sup>1</sup> A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 366; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the*

*Egyptians*, i. 487 *sq.*, ii. 206-211. These stories of the scorpions are not told by Plutarch.



the king's children with her and sailed away. As soon as they were alone, she opened the chest, and laying her face on the face of her brother she kissed him and wept. But the child came behind her softly and saw what she was about, and she turned and looked at him in anger, and the child could not bear her look and died; but some say that it was not so, but that he fell into the sea and was drowned. It is he whom the Egyptians sing of at their banquets under the name of Maneros. But Isis put the coffer by and went to see her son Horus at the city of Buto, and Typhon found the coffer as he was hunting a boar one night by the light of a full moon.<sup>1</sup> And he knew the body, and rent it into fourteen pieces, and scattered them abroad. But Isis sailed up and down the marshes in a shallop made of papyrus, looking for the pieces; and that is why when people sail in shallops made of papyrus, the crocodiles do not hurt them, for they fear or respect the goddess. And that is the reason, too, why there are many graves of Osiris in Egypt, for she buried each limb as she found it. But others will have it that she buried an image of him in every city, pretending it was his body, in order that Osiris might be worshipped in many places, and that if Typhon searched for the real grave he might not be able to find it.<sup>2</sup> However, the genital member of Osiris had been eaten by the fishes, so Isis made an image of it instead, and the image is used by the Egyptians at their festivals to this day.<sup>3</sup>

Such is the myth of Osiris, as told by Plutarch. A long inscription in the temple at Dendera has preserved a list of the god's graves, and other texts mention the parts of his body which were treasured as holy relics in each of the sanctuaries. Thus his heart was at Athribis, his backbone at Busiris, his neck at Letopolis, and his head at Memphis. As often happens in such cases, some of his divine limbs were miraculously multiplied. His head, for example, was at Abydos as well as at Memphis, and his legs, which were remarkably numerous, would have sufficed for several ordinary

The various members of Osiris treasured as relics in various parts of Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 18. Compare Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium hæresium*, v. 7, p. 142 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Diodorus, i. 21. 5-9, iv. 6. 3; Strabo, xvii. i. 23, p. 803.

mortals.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, however, Osiris was nothing to St. Denys, of whom no less than seven heads, all equally genuine, are extant.<sup>2</sup>

Being brought to life again, Osiris reigns as king and judge of the dead in the other world.

According to native Egyptian accounts, which supplement that of Plutarch, when Isis had found the corpse of her husband Osiris, she and her sister Nephthys sat down beside it and uttered a lament which in after ages became the type of all Egyptian lamentations for the dead. In pity for her sorrow the sun-god Ra sent down from heaven the jackal-headed god Anubis, who, with the aid of Isis and Nephthys, of Thoth and Horus, pieced together the broken body of the murdered god, swathed it in linen bandages, and observed all the other rites which the Egyptians were wont to perform over the bodies of the departed. Then Isis fanned the cold clay with her wings: Osiris revived, and thenceforth reigned as king over the dead in the other world.<sup>3</sup> There he bore the titles of Lord of the Underworld, Lord of Eternity, Ruler of the Dead.<sup>4</sup> There, too, in the great Hall of the Two Truths he presided as judge at the trial of the souls of the departed, who made their solemn confession before him, and, their heart having been weighed in the balance of justice, received the reward of virtue in a life eternal or the punishment of vice in annihilation.<sup>5</sup> The confession which the *Book of the Dead* puts in the mouth of the deceased at the judgment-bar of Osiris<sup>6</sup> sets the

<sup>1</sup> H. Brugsch, "Das Osiris-Mysterium von Tentyra," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, xix. (1881) pp. 77 sqq.; V. Loret, "Les fêtes d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, iii. (1882) pp. 43 sqq.; R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 697 sqq.; A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, pp. 584 sqq.; *id.*, *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, p. 115; A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 367 sq.

<sup>2</sup> J. Rendel Harris, *The Annotators of the Codex Bezae*, p. 104, note 2, referring to Dulaure.

<sup>3</sup> A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 35 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire*

*ancienne*, i. 176; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 140, 262. On Osiris as king of the dead see Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 79.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osirion at Abydos* (London, 1904), pp. 8, 17, 18.

<sup>5</sup> On Osiris as judge of the dead see A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, pp. 131 sqq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 187 sqq.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (London, 1901), i. pp. liii. sqq.; *id.*, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 141 sqq.; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 102 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> *The Book of the Dead*, ch. cxxv. (vol. ii. pp. 355 sqq. of Budge's translation; pp. 369 sqq. of Pierret's French translation); R. V. Lanzone,



morality of the ancient Egyptians in a very favourable light. In rendering an account of his life the deceased solemnly protested that he had not oppressed his fellow-men, that he had made none to weep, that he had done no murder, neither committed fornication nor borne false witness, that he had not falsified the balance, that he had not taken the milk from the mouths of babes, that he had given bread to the hungry and water to the thirsty, and had clothed the naked. In harmony with these professions are the epitaphs on Egyptian graves, which reveal, if not the moral practice, at least the moral ideals of those who slept beneath them. Thus, for example, a man says in his epitaph: "I gave bread to the hungry and clothes to the naked, and ferried across in my own boat him who could not pass the water. I was a father to the orphan, a husband to the widow, a shelter from the wind to them that were cold. I am one that spake good and told good. I earned my substance in righteousness."<sup>1</sup> Those who had done thus in their mortal life and had been acquitted at the Great Assize, were believed to dwell thenceforth at ease in a land where the corn grew higher than on earth, where harvests never failed, where trees were always green, and wives for ever young and fair.<sup>2</sup>

In the resurrection of Osiris the Egyptians saw the pledge of a life everlasting for themselves beyond the grave. They believed that every man would live eternally in the other world if only his surviving friends did for his body what the gods had done for the body of Osiris. Hence the ceremonies observed by the Egyptians over the dead were an exact copy of those which Anubis, Horus, and the rest had performed over Osiris. Indeed every man after death was identified with Osiris and bore his name. In an Egyptian text it is said of the departed that "as surely as Osiris lives, so shall he live also; as surely as Osiris did not die, so shall he not die; as surely

In the resurrection of Osiris the Egyptians saw a pledge of their own immortality.

*Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 788 sqq.; A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, pp. 132-134; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, I. 188-191; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 104-106.

<sup>1</sup> A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 106. Compare A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, pp. 134 sq.

<sup>2</sup> A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.* p. 135; G. Maspero, *op. cit.* I. 194 sq.; A. Erman, *op. cit.* pp. 106-109.

as Osiris is not annihilated, so shall he too not be annihilated." And the resurrection of the dead was conceived, like that of Osiris, not merely as spiritual but also as bodily. "They possess their heart, they possess their senses, they possess their mouth, they possess their feet, they possess their arms, they possess all their limbs."<sup>1</sup>

Combat  
between  
Set and  
Horus, the  
brother  
and the son  
of Osiris,  
for the  
crown of  
Egypt.

When Horus the younger, the son of Osiris and Isis, was grown to man's estate, the ghost of his royal and murdered father appeared to him and urged him, like another Hamlet, to avenge the foul unnatural murder upon his wicked uncle. Thus encouraged, the youth attacked the miscreant. The combat was terrific and lasted many days. Horus lost an eye in the conflict and Set suffered a still more serious mutilation. At last Thoth parted the combatants and healed their wounds. According to one account the great battle was fought on the twenty-sixth day of the month of Thoth. Foiled in open war, the artful uncle now took the law of his virtuous nephew. He brought a suit of bastardy against Horus, hoping thus to rob him of his inheritance and to get possession of it himself. The case was tried before the high court of the gods in the great hall at Heliopolis, and the august judges pronounced Horus the true-begotten son of his father. He accordingly assumed the crown and mounted the throne of his father and grandfather. However, according to another and perhaps later version of the story, the victory of Horus over his uncle was by no means so decisive, and their struggles ended in a compromise, by which Horus reigned over the Delta, while Set became king of the upper valley of the Nile from near Memphis to the first cataract.<sup>2</sup>

These legends of a contest for the throne of Egypt

<sup>1</sup> A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 96-99; *id.*, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 416. Compare A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, pp. 123-126; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (London, 1901), i. pp. liii. sqq.; *id.*, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 126, 140 sq.; A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, p. 312. However, in later times the body with which the dead came to

life was believed to be a spiritual, not a material body; it was called *sâhu*. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, i. pp. lvii. sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 19 and 55; A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 368; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 37 sq.; A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, p. 114; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 176-178.



may perhaps contain a reminiscence of real dynastical struggles which attended an attempt to change the right of succession from the female to the male line. For under a rule of female kinship the heir to the throne is either the late king's brother, or the son of the late king's sister, while under a rule of male kinship the heir to the throne is the late king's son. In the legend of Osiris the rival heirs are Set and Horus, Set being the late king's brother, and Horus the late king's son ; though Horus indeed united both claims to the crown, being the son of the king's sister as well as of the king. A similar attempt to shift the line of succession seems to have given rise to similar contests at Rome.<sup>1</sup>

The legend of their contest may be a reminiscence of dynastic struggles.

<sup>1</sup> See my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 253 sq.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OFFICIAL EGYPTIAN CALENDAR

The date of a festival sometimes furnishes a clue to the nature of the god.

A USEFUL clue to the original nature of a god or goddess is often furnished by the season at which his or her festival is celebrated. Thus, if the festival falls at the new or the full moon, there is a certain presumption that the deity thus honoured either is the moon or at least has lunar affinities. If the festival is held at the winter or summer solstice, we naturally surmise that the god is the sun, or at all events that he stands in some close relation to that luminary. Again, if the festival coincides with the time of sowing or harvest, we are inclined to infer that the divinity is an embodiment of the earth or of the corn. These presumptions or inferences, taken by themselves, are by no means conclusive; but if they happen to be confirmed by other indications, the evidence may be regarded as fairly strong.

The year of the Egyptian calendar a vague or movable one.

Unfortunately, in dealing with the Egyptian gods we are in a great measure precluded from making use of this clue. The reason is not that the dates of the festivals are always unknown, but that they shifted from year to year, until after a long interval they had revolved throughout the whole course of the seasons. This gradual revolution of the festal Egyptian cycle resulted from the employment of a calendar year which neither corresponded exactly to the solar year nor was periodically corrected by intercalation.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> As to the Egyptian calendar see L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 93 sqq.; Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), ii. 368 sqq.; R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Ägypter*, i. (Berlin, 1849) pp. 125

sqq.; H. Brugsch, *Die Ägyptologie* (Leipzig, 1891), pp. 347-366; A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 468 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 207-210; Ed. Meyer, "Ägyptische Chronologie," *Abhandlungen d. kön. Preuss. Akademie d. Wissenschaften*, 1904,



solar year is equivalent to about three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter days; but the ancient Egyptians, ignoring the quarter of a day, reckoned the year at three hundred and sixty-five days only.<sup>1</sup> Thus each of their calendar years was shorter than the true solar year by about a quarter of a day. In four years the deficiency amounted to one whole day; in forty years it amounted to ten days; in four hundred years it amounted to a hundred days; and so it went on increasing until after a lapse of four times three hundred and sixty-five, or one thousand four hundred and sixty solar years, the deficiency amounted to three hundred and sixty-five days, or a whole Egyptian year. Hence one thousand four hundred and sixty solar years, or their equivalent, one thousand four hundred and sixty-one Egyptian years, formed a period or cycle at the end of which the Egyptian festivals returned to those points of the solar year at which they had been celebrated in the beginning.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime they had been held successively on every day of the solar year, though always on the same day of the calendar.

Thus the official calendar was completely divorced, except at rare and long intervals, from what may be called the natural calendar of the shepherd, the husbandman, and the sailor—that is, from the course of the seasons in which the times for the various labours of cattle-breeding, tillage, and navigation are marked by the position of the sun in the sky, the rising or setting of the stars, the fall of rain, the growth of pasture, the ripening of the corn, the blowing of certain winds, and so forth. Nowhere, perhaps, are the events of this natural calendar better marked or more regular in their recurrence than in Egypt; nowhere accordingly could their divergence from the corresponding dates of the official calendar be more readily observed. The divergence certainly did not escape the notice of the Egyptians themselves, and some of them apparently attempted successfully to correct it. Thus we are told that the Theban priests, who particularly excelled in astronomy,

Thus the official calendar was divorced from the natural calendar, which is marked by the course of the seasons.

pp. 2 sqq.; F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. (Leipzig, 1906) pp. 150 sqq.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 4, with A. Wiede-

mann's note; Geminus, *Eisagege*, 6, pp. 42 sq. ed. Halma (Paris, 1819); Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Geminus, *Eisagege*, 6, pp. 43 sq. ed. Halma.

were acquainted with the true length of the solar year, and harmonised the calendar with it by intercalating a day every few, probably every four, years.<sup>1</sup> But this scientific improvement was too deeply opposed to the religious conservatism of the Egyptian nature to win general acceptance. "The Egyptians," said Geminus, a Greek astronomer writing about 77 B.C., "are of an opposite opinion and purpose from the Greeks. For they neither reckon the years by the sun nor the months and days by the moon, but they observe a peculiar system of their own. They wish, in fact, that the sacrifices should not always be offered to the gods at the same time of the year, but that they should pass through all the seasons of the year, so that the summer festival should in time be celebrated in winter, in autumn, and in spring. For that purpose they employ a year of three hundred and sixty-five days, composed of twelve months of thirty days each, with five supplementary days added. But they do not add the quarter of a day for the reason I have given—namely, in order that their festivals may revolve."<sup>2</sup> So attached, indeed, were the Egyptians to their old calendar, that the kings at their consecration were led by the priest of Isis at Memphis into the holy of holies, and there made to swear that they would maintain the year of three hundred and sixty-five days without intercalation.<sup>3</sup>

Attempt of  
Ptolemy  
III. to  
reform the  
Egyptian  
calendar  
by inter-  
calation.

The practical inconvenience of a calendar which marked true time only once in about fifteen hundred years might be calmly borne by a submissive Oriental race like the ancient Egyptians, but it naturally proved a stumbling-block to the less patient temperament of their European conquerors. Accordingly in the reign of King Ptolemy III. Euergetes a decree was passed that henceforth the movable Egyptian

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 50. 2; Strabo, xvii. 1. 46, p. 816. According to Brugsch (*Die Ägyptologie*, pp. 349 sq.), the Egyptians would seem to have denoted the movable year of the calendar and the fixed year of the sun by different written symbols. For more evidence that they were acquainted with a four years' period, corrected by intercalation, see K. Lepsius, *Chronologie der Ägypter*, i. 149 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Geminus, *Eisagege*, 6, p. 43 ed.

Halma. The same writer further describes as a popular Greek error the opinion that the Egyptian festival of Isis coincided with the winter solstice. In his day, he tells us, the two events were separated by an interval of a full month, though they had coincided a hundred and twenty years before the time he was writing.

<sup>3</sup> *Scholium in Caesaris Germanici Aratea*, p. 409 ed. Fr. Eysenhardt, in his edition of Martianus Capella.



year should be converted into a fixed solar year by the intercalation of one day at the end of every four years, "in order that the seasons may do their duty perpetually according to the present constitution of the world, and that it may not happen, through the shifting of the star by one day in four years, that some of the public festivals which are now held in the winter should ever be celebrated in the summer, and that other festivals now held in the summer should hereafter be celebrated in the winter, as has happened before, and must happen again if the year of three hundred and sixty-five days be retained." The decree was passed in the year 239 or 238 B.C. by the high priests, scribes, and other dignitaries of the Egyptian church assembled in convocation at Canopus; but we cannot doubt that the measure, though it embodied native Egyptian science, was prompted by the king or his Macedonian advisers.<sup>1</sup> This sage attempt to reform the erratic calendar was not permanently successful. The change may indeed have been carried out during the reign of the king who instituted it, but it was abandoned by the year 196 B.C. at latest, as we learn from the celebrated inscription known as the Rosetta stone, in which a month of the Macedonian calendar is equated to the corresponding month of the movable Egyptian year.<sup>2</sup> And the testimony of Geminus, which I have cited, proves that in the following century the festivals were still revolving in the old style. The reform which the Macedonian king had vainly attempted to impose upon his people was accomplished by the practical Romans when they took over the administration of the country. The expedient by which they effected the change was a simple one; indeed it was no other than that to which Ptolemy Evergetes had resorted for the same purpose. They merely intercalated one day at the end of every four years, thus equalising within a small fraction four calendar years to four solar years. Henceforth the official

Institution  
of the fixed  
Alex-  
andrian  
year by  
the  
Romans.

<sup>1</sup> Copies of the decree in hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek have been found inscribed on stones in Egypt. See Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 551; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 56; J. P. Mahaffy, *The Empire*

*of the Ptolemies* (London, 1895), pp. 205 sqq., 226 sqq. The star mentioned in the decree is the Dog-star (Sirius). See below, pp. 286 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 90, with note 25 of the editor.

and the natural calendars were in practical agreement. The movable Egyptian year had been converted into the fixed Alexandrian year, as it was called, which agreed with the Julian year in length and in its system of intercalation, though it differed from that year in retaining the twelve equal Egyptian months and five supplementary days.<sup>1</sup> But while the new calendar received the sanction of law and regulated the business of government, the ancient calendar was too firmly established in popular usage to be at once displaced. Accordingly it survived for ages side by side with its modern rival.<sup>2</sup> The spread of Christianity, which required a fixed year for the due observance of its festivals, did much to promote the adoption of the new Alexandrian style, and by the beginning of the fifth century the ancient movable year of Egypt appears to have been not only dead but forgotten.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the Alexandrian year see L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 140 sqq. That admirable chronologer argued (pp. 153-161) that the innovation was introduced not, as had been commonly supposed, in 25 B.C., but in 30 B.C., the year in which Augustus defeated Mark Antony under the walls of Alexandria and captured the city. However, the question seems to be still unsettled. See F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 226 sqq., who thinks it probable that the change was made in 26 B.C. For the purposes of this study the precise date of the introduction of the Alexandrian year is not material.

<sup>2</sup> In demotic the fixed Alexandrian year is called "the year of the Ionians," while the old movable year is styled "the year of the Egyptians." Documents have been found which are dated by the day and the month of both years. See H. Brugsch, *Die Ägyptologie*, pp. 354 sq.

<sup>3</sup> L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i. 149-152. Macrobius thought that the Egyptians had always employed a solar year of 365½ days (*Saturn.* i. 12. 2, i. 14. 3). The ancient calendar of the Mexicans

resembled that of the Egyptians except that it was divided into eighteen months of twenty days each (instead of twelve months of thirty days each), with five supplementary days added at the end of the year. These supplementary days (*nemontemi*) were deemed unlucky: nothing was done on them; they were dedicated to no deity; and persons born on them were considered unfortunate. See B. de Sahagun, *Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle-Espagne*, traduite par D. Jourdanet et R. Simeon, pp. 50, 164; Clavigero, *History of Mexico* (London, 1807), i. 290. As this Mexican year of 365 days appears not to have been corrected by intercalation, the festivals tended, like the Egyptian, to rotate throughout the solar year, and so to fall out of harmony with the natural course of the seasons on which they had been originally based. See E. Seier, "The Mexican chronology," in *Bulletin* 28 of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Washington, 1904), pp. 13 sqq. On the other hand, the Indians of Yucatan corrected the deficiency of the year of 365 days by intercalating one day every four years. See D. de Landa, *Relation des choses de la Yucatan* (Paris, 1864), pp. 202-205.



## CHAPTER III

### THE CALENDAR OF THE EGYPTIAN FARMER

#### § 1. *The Rise and Fall of the Nile*

IF the Egyptian farmer of the olden time could thus get no help, except at the rarest intervals, from the official or sacerdotal calendar, he must have been compelled to observe for himself those natural signals which marked the times for the various operations of husbandry. In all ages of which we possess any records the Egyptians have been an agricultural people, dependent for their subsistence on the growth of the corn. The cereals which they cultivated were wheat, barley, and apparently sorghum (*Holcus sorghum*, Linnæus), the *doora* of the modern Fellahin.<sup>1</sup> Then as now the whole country, with the exception of a fringe on the coast of the Mediterranean, was almost rainless, and owed its immense fertility entirely to the annual inundation of the Nile, which, regulated by an elaborate system of dams and canals, was distributed over the fields, renewing the soil year by year with a fresh deposit of mud washed down from the great equatorial lakes and the mountains of Abyssinia. Hence the rise of the river has always been watched by the inhabitants with the utmost anxiety; for if it either falls short of or exceeds a certain height, dearth and famine are the inevitable consequences.<sup>2</sup> The water begins to rise early in

In Egypt the operations of husbandry are dependent on the annual rise and fall of the Nile.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 36, with A. Wiedemann's note; Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 1, i. 17. 1; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* v. 57 sq., xviii. 60; Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), ii. 398, 399, 418, 426 sq.; A. Erman,

*Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 577 sqq.; A. de Candolle, *Origin of Cultivated Plants*, pp. 354 sq., 369, 381; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, ii. 14; Diodorus Siculus, i. 36; Strabo, xvii. 1. 3, pp.

June, but it is not until the latter half of July that it swells to a mighty tide. By the end of September the inundation is at its greatest height. The country is now submerged, and presents the appearance of a sea of turbid water, from which the towns and villages, built on higher ground, rise like islands. For about a month the flood remains nearly stationary, then sinks more and more rapidly, till by December or January the river has returned to its ordinary bed. With the approach of summer the level of the water continues to fall. In the early days of June the Nile is reduced to half its ordinary breadth; and Egypt, scorched by the sun, blasted by the wind that has blown from the Sahara for many days, seems a mere continuation of the desert. The trees are choked with a thick layer of grey dust. A few meagre patches of vegetables, watered with difficulty, struggle painfully for existence in the immediate neighbourhood of the villages. Some appearance of verdure lingers beside the canals and in the hollows from which the moisture has not wholly evaporated. The plain appears to pant in the pitiless sunshine, bare, dusty, ash-coloured, cracked and seamed as far as the eye can see with a network of fissures. From the middle of April till the middle of June the land of Egypt is but half alive, waiting for the new Nile.<sup>1</sup>

Irrigation,  
sowing,  
and harvest  
in Egypt.

For countless ages this cycle of natural events has determined the annual labours of the Egyptian husbandman. The first work of the agricultural year is the cutting of the dams which have hitherto prevented the swollen

786-788; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 167-170; Seneca, *Natur. Quaest.* iv. 2. 1-10; E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), pp. 17 sq., 495 sq.; A. Erman, *op. cit.* pp. 21-25; G. Maspero, *op. cit.* I. 22 sqq. However, since the Suez Canal was cut, rain has been commoner in Lower Egypt (A. H. Sayce on Herodotus, ii. 14).

<sup>1</sup> G. Maspero, *op. cit.* I. 22-26; A. Erman, *op. cit.* p. 23. According to Lane (*op. cit.* pp. 17 sq.) the Nile rises in Egypt about the summer solstice (June 21) and reaches its greatest height by the autumnal equinox (Sep-

tember 22). This agrees exactly with the statement of Diodorus Siculus (i. 36. 2). Herodotus says (ii. 19) that the rise of the river lasted for a hundred days from the summer solstice. Compare Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* v. 57, xviii. 167; Seneca, *Nat. Quaest.* iv. 2. 1. According to Prof. Ginzler the Nile does not rise in Egypt till the last week of June (*Handbuch der mathemat. u. technisch. Chronologie*, i. 154). For ancient descriptions of Egypt in time of flood see Herodotus, ii. 97; Diodorus Siculus, i. 36. 8 sq.; Strabo, xvii. 1. 4, p. 788; Aelian, *De natura animalium*, x. 43; Achilles Tatius, iv. 12; Seneca, *Natur. Quaest.* iv. 2. 8 and 11.



river from flooding the canals and the fields. This is done, and the pent-up waters released on their beneficent mission, in the first half of August.<sup>1</sup> In November, when the inundation has subsided, wheat, barley, and sorghum are sown. The time of harvest varies with the district, falling about a month later in the north than in the south. In Upper or Southern Egypt barley is reaped at the beginning of March, wheat at the beginning of April, and sorghum about the end of that month.<sup>2</sup>

It is natural to suppose that these various events of the agricultural year were celebrated by the Egyptian farmer with some simple religious rites designed to secure the blessing of the gods upon his labours. These rustic ceremonies he would continue to perform year after year at the same season, while the solemn festivals of the priests continued to shift, with the shifting calendar, from summer through autumn to winter, and onward through spring to summer. The rites of the husbandman were stable because they rested on direct observation of nature: the rites of the priest were unstable because they were based on a false calculation. Yet many of the priestly festivals may have been nothing but the old rural festivals disguised in the course of ages by the pomp of sacerdotalism and severed, by the error of the calendar, from their roots in the natural cycle of the seasons.

The events of the agricultural year were probably celebrated with religious rites.

### § 2. Rites of Irrigation

These conjectures are confirmed by the little we know both of the popular and of the official Egyptian religion.

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), ii. 365 sq.; E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), pp. 498 sqq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 23 sq., 69. The last-mentioned writer says (p. 24) that the dams are commonly cut between the first and sixteenth of July, but apparently he means August.

<sup>2</sup> Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *op. cit.* ii. 398 sq.; Prof. W. M. Flinders Petrie, cited above, p. 190, note 2. According

to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xviii. 60) barley was reaped in Egypt in the sixth month from sowing, and wheat in the seventh month. Diodorus, on the other hand, says (i. 36. 4) that the corn was reaped after four or five months. Perhaps Pliny refers to Lower, and Diodorus to Upper Egypt. Elsewhere Pliny affirms (*Nat. Hist.* xviii. 169) that the corn was sown at the beginning of November, and that the reaping began at the end of March and was completed in May. This certainly applies better to Lower than to Upper Egypt.

Mourning for Osiris at mid-summer when the Nile begins to rise.

Thus we are told that the Egyptians held a festival of Isis at the time when the Nile began to rise. They believed that the goddess was then mourning for the lost Osiris, and that the tears which dropped from her eyes swelled the impetuous tide of the river.<sup>1</sup> The belief survives in a modified form to this day. For the Nile, as we saw, begins to rise in June about the time of the summer solstice, and the people still attribute its increased volume to a miraculous drop which falls into the river on the night of the seventeenth of the month. The charms and divinations which they practise on that mystic night in order to ascertain the length of their own life and to rid the houses of bugs may well date from a remote antiquity.<sup>2</sup> Now if Osiris was originally a god of the corn, nothing could be more natural than that he should be mourned at midsummer. For by that time the harvest was past, the fields were bare, the river ran low, life seemed to be suspended, the corn-god was dead. At such a moment people who saw the handiwork of divine beings in all the operations of nature might well trace the swelling of the sacred stream to the tears shed by the goddess at the death of the beneficent corn-god her husband.

And the sign of the rising waters on earth was soon followed by a sign in heaven. For about a month later, on the twentieth of July, when the river had swollen almost to bursting, the splendid star of Sirius, the brightest of all the fixed stars, appeared at dawn in the east just before sunrise.<sup>3</sup> The Egyptians called it Sothis, and regarded it as the star of Isis,<sup>4</sup> just as the Babylonians deemed the planet Venus the

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, x. 32. 18.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), ch. xxvi. pp. 495 sq.

<sup>3</sup> L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 121 sqq.; R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Ägypter*, i. 168 sq. The coincidence of the rising of Sirius with the swelling of the Nile is mentioned by Tibullus (i. 7. 21 sq.) and Aelian (*De natura animalium*, x. 45).

<sup>4</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 27. 4; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 21, 22, 38, 61;

Porphyry, *De antro nympharum*, 24; Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius, ii. 517; Canopic decree, lines 36 sq., in W. Dittenberger's *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 56 (lines 28 sq. in Ch. Michel's *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 551); R. V. Lanson, *Dictionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 825 sq. On the ceiling of the Memnonium at Thebes the heliacal rising of Sirius is represented under the form and name of Isis (Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, ed. 1878, iii. 102).

Sirius  
regarded  
as the star  
of Isis.



star of Astarte. To both peoples apparently the brilliant luminary in the morning sky seemed the goddess of life and love come to mourn her departed lover or spouse and to wake him from the dead. Hence the rising of Sirius on that day, the twentieth of July, marked the beginning of the sacred Egyptian year,<sup>1</sup> and was regularly celebrated by a festival which did not shift with the shifting official year.<sup>2</sup> The

The rising of Sirius on the 20th of July marked the beginning of the sacred Egyptian year.

<sup>1</sup> Porphyrus and the Canopic decree, *Ilac.*; Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 10, xxi. 10. In inscriptions on the temple at Syene, the modern Assuan, Isis is called "the mistress of the beginning of the year," the goddess "who revolves about the world, near to the constellation of Orion, who rises in the eastern sky and passes to the west perpetually" (R. V. Lanson, *op. cit.*, p. 826). It is only in Middle and Lower Egypt that Sirius rises on the twentieth of July. With every degree of latitude that you go south the star rises nearly a day earlier. Thus, whereas near Alexandria in the north Sirius does not rise till the twenty-second of July, at Syene in the south it rises on the sixteenth of July. See R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Aegypter*, i. 168 *sq.* Now it is to be remembered that the rising of the Nile, as well as the rising of Sirius, is observed earlier and earlier the farther south you go, later and later the farther north you go. The coincident variation of the two phenomena could hardly fail to confirm the Egyptians in their belief of a natural or supernatural connection between them. In the fourth millennium B.C. the heliacal rising of Sirius coincided with the summer solstice and the beginning of the rise of the Nile. See F. K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathemat. u. technisch. Chronologie*, i. 190. According to some, the festival of the rising of Sirius and the beginning of the sacred year was held on the nineteenth, not the twentieth of July. See Ed. Meyer, "Aegyptische Chronologie," *Abhandlungen der k. preuss. Akademie d. Wissenschaften*, 1904, pp. 22 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Eudoxi ars astronomica, qualis in charta Aegyptiaca superest*, ed. F. Blass (Kiliae, 1887), p. 14, α δδ ἀστ[ρο]ν[ό]μοι καὶ οἱ λεπτογράμ[μα]ται χ[ρ]ο[ν]ο[ν]ται τὰς κατὰ σελή[ν]ης ἡμέ[ρ]ας

καὶ ἀγορεύει παρὰ ἡμέ[ρ]ας π[ρ]ο[β]λεπ[ο]μένης τὴν αὐτὴν μὲν ὡς ἐνομή[σθη] τὰ δὲ κατὰ χιτῆρια καὶ κενὸν ἀνατολήν καὶ σελήνηα κατὰ θε[ο]ν, ἀναλεγόμενοι τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκ τῶν ἀγνοητῶν. This statement of Eudoxus or of one of his pupils is important, since it definitely proves that, besides the shifting festivals of the shifting official year, the Egyptians celebrated other festivals, which were dated by direct observation of natural phenomena, namely, the annual inundation, the rise of Sirius, and the phases of the moon. The same distinction of the fixed from the movable festivals is indicated in one of the Hibeh papyri, but the passage is unfortunately mutilated. See *The Hibeh Papyri*, part I., edited by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt (London, 1906), pp. 145, 151 (pointed out to me by my friend Mr. W. Wyse). The annual festival in honour of Ptolemy and Berenice was fixed on the day of the rising of Sirius. See the Canopic decree, in W. Dittenberger's *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 56 (vol. i. pp. 102 *sq.*).

The rise of Sirius was carefully observed by the islanders of Ceos, in the Aegean. They watched for it with arms in their hands and sacrificed on the mountains to the star, drawing from its aspect omens of the salubrity or unhealthiness of the coming year. The sacrifice was believed to secure the advent of the cool North winds (the Etesian winds as the Greeks call them), which regularly begin to blow about this time of the year, and mitigate the oppressive heat of summer in the Aegean. See Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.*, ii. 516-527, with the note of the Scholiast on vv. 498, 526; Theophrastus, *De ventis*, ii. 14; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, vi. 3. 29, p. 753, ed. Potter; Nonnus, *Dionys.*, v. 269.

first day of the first month Thoth was theoretically supposed to date from the heliacal rising of the bright star, and in all probability it really did so when the official or sacerdotal year of three hundred and sixty-five days was first instituted. But the miscalculation which has been already explained<sup>1</sup> had the effect of making the star to shift its place in the calendar by one day in four years. Thus if Sirius rose on the first of Thoth in one year, it would rise on the second of Thoth four years afterwards, on the third of Thoth eight years afterwards, and so on until after the lapse of a Sīriac or Sothic period of fourteen hundred and sixty solar years the first of Thoth again coincided with the heliacal rising of Sirius, that is, with the twentieth of July.<sup>2</sup> This observation of the

279; Hyginus, *Astronomica*, ii. 4; Cicero, *De divinatione*, i. 57. 130; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 6-8; C. Neumann und J. Partsch, *Physikalische Geographie von Griechenland*, pp. 96 sqq. On the top of Mount Pelion in Thessaly there was a sanctuary of Zeus, where sacrifices were offered at the rising of Sirius, in the height of the summer, by men of rank, who were chosen by the priest and wore fresh sheep-skins. See [Dicaearchus,] "Descriptio Graeciae," *Geographi Graeci Minores*, ed. C. Müller, i. 107; *Historicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 262.

<sup>1</sup> Above, pp. 278 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> The first of Thoth coincided with the heliacal rising of Sirius (July 20) in the years 2782 B.C., 1322 B.C., and 139 A.D. It would seem, therefore, that the movable Egyptian year of 365 days may have been instituted in 1322 B.C., 2782 B.C., or perhaps in 4242 B.C. (2782 + 1460). See L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i. 125 sqq.; F. K. Ginzel, *op. cit.* i. 192 sqq.; E. Meyer, *op. cit.* pp. 38 sqq. When the fixed Alexandrian year was introduced in 30 B.C. (see above, pp. 281 sq.) the first of Thoth fell on August 29, which accordingly was thenceforth reckoned the first day of the year in the Alexandrian calendar. See L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i. 153 sqq. The period of 1460 solar or 1461 movable

Egyptian years was variously called a Sothic period (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* i. 21. 136, p. 401 ed. Potter), a Canicular year (from *Canicula*, "the Dog-star," that is, Sirius), a heliacal year, and a year of God (Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 10). But there is no evidence or probability that the period was recognised by the Egyptian astronomers who instituted the movable year of 365 days. Rather, as Ideler pointed out (*op. cit.* i. 132), it must have been a later discovery based on continued observations of the heliacal rising of Sirius and of its gradual displacement through the whole length of the official calendar. Brugsch, indeed, went so far as to suppose that the period was a discovery of astronomers of the second century A.D., to which they were led by the coincidence of the first of Thoth with the heliacal rising of Sirius in 139 A.D. (*Die Aegyptologie*, p. 357). But the discovery, based as it is on a very simple calculation ( $365 \times 4 = 1460$ ), could hardly fail to be made as soon as astronomers estimated the length of the solar year at  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days, and that they did so at least as early as 238 B.C. is proved conclusively by the Canopic decree. See above, pp. 280 sq. As to the Sothic period see further R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Aegypter*, i. 165 sqq.; F. K. Ginzel, *op. cit.* i. 187 sqq.

For the convenience of the reader I



gradual displacement of the star in the calendar has been of the utmost importance for the progress of astronomy, since it led the Egyptians directly to the determination of the approximately true length of the solar year and thus laid the basis of our modern calendar; for the Julian calendar, which we owe to Caesar, was founded on the Egyptian theory, though not on the Egyptian practice.<sup>1</sup> It was therefore a fortunate moment for the world when some pious Egyptian, thousands of years ago, identified for the first time the bright star of Sirius with his goddess; for the identification induced his countrymen to regard the heavenly body with an attention which they would never have paid to it if they had known it to be nothing but a world vastly greater than our own and separated from it by an inconceivable, if not immeasurable, abyss of space.

The cutting of the dams and the admission of the water into the canals and fields is a great event in the Egyptian year. At Cairo the operation generally takes place between the sixth and the sixteenth of August, and till lately was attended by ceremonies which deserve to be noticed, because they were probably handed down from antiquity. An ancient canal, known by the name of the Khalij, formerly passed through the native town of Cairo. Near its entrance the canal was crossed by a dam of earth, very broad at the bottom and diminishing in breadth upwards, which used to be constructed before or soon after the Nile began to rise. In front of the dam, on the side of the river, was

The observation of the gradual displacement of Sirius in the calendar led to the determination of the true length of the solar year.

Ceremonies observed in Egypt at the cutting of the dams early in August.

subjoin a table of the Egyptian months, with their dates.

See L. Ideler, *op. cit.* i. 143 sq.; F. K. Ginzel, *op. cit.* i. 200.

Egyptian Months.	Sothic Year beginning July 20.	Alexandrian Year.
Thoth .	20 July .	29 August
Phaophi .	19 August .	28 September
Atyri .	18 September .	28 October
Choiak .	18 October .	27 November
Tybi .	17 November .	27 December
Mechir .	17 December .	26 January
Phamenoth .	16 January .	25 February
Pharmuthi .	15 February .	27 March
Fachon .	17 March .	26 April
Payni .	16 April .	26 May
Epiphi .	16 May .	25 June
Mesori .	15 June .	25 July
Supplementary day	15 July .	24 August

<sup>1</sup> The Canopic decree (above, pp. 280 sq.) suffices to prove that the Egyptian astronomers, long before Caesar's time, were well acquainted with the approximately exact length of the solar year, although they did not use their knowledge to correct the calendar except for a short time in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes. With regard to Caesar's debt to the Egyptian astronomers see Dio Cassius, xliii. 26; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 14. 3, i. 16. 39; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 166 sqq.

The Bride  
of the Nile.

reared a truncated cone of earth called the 'arooseh or "bride," on the top of which a little maize or millet was generally sown. This "bride" was commonly washed down by the rising tide a week or a fortnight before the cutting of the dam. Tradition runs that the old custom was to deck a young virgin in gay apparel and throw her into the river as a sacrifice to obtain a plentiful inundation.<sup>1</sup> However that may be, the intention of the practice appears to have been to marry the river, conceived as a male power, to his bride the cornland, which was soon to be fertilised by his water. The ceremony was therefore a charm to ensure the growth of the crops. As such it probably dated, in one form or another, from ancient times. Dense crowds assembled to witness the cutting of the dam. The operation was performed before sunrise, and many people spent the preceding night on the banks of the canal or in boats lit with lamps on the river, while fireworks were displayed and guns discharged at frequent intervals. Before sunrise a great number of workmen began to cut the dam, and the task was accomplished about an hour before the sun appeared on the horizon. When only a thin ridge of earth remained, a boat with an officer on board was propelled against it, and breaking through the slight barrier descended with the rush of water into the canal. The Governor of Cairo flung a purse of gold into the boat as it passed. Formerly the custom was to throw money into the canal. The populace used to dive after it, and several lives were generally lost in the scramble.<sup>2</sup> This practice also would seem to have been ancient, for Seneca tells us that at a place called the Veins of the Nile, not far from Philae, the priests used to cast money and offerings of gold into the river at a festival which apparently took place at the rising of the water.<sup>3</sup> At Cairo the time-

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Paisley and London, 1895), ch. xxvi. pp. 499 sq.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Lane, *op. cit.* pp. 500-504; Sir Auckland Colvin, *The Making of Modern Egypt* (London, 1906), pp. 278 sq. According to the latter writer, a dressed dummy was thrown into the

river at each cutting of the dam.

<sup>3</sup> Seneca, *Naturalis Quaestiones*, iv. 2. 7. The cutting of the dams is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus (i. 36. 3), and the festival on that occasion (τὰ κατὰ γέφυρα) is noticed by Endoxus (or one of his pupils) in a passage which has already been quoted. See above, p. 287, note 2.



honoured ceremony came to an end in 1897, when the old canal was filled up. An electric tramway now runs over the spot where for countless ages crowds of worshippers or holiday-makers had annually assembled to witness the marriage of the Nile.<sup>1</sup>

### § 3. Rites of Sowing

The next great operation of the agricultural year in Egypt is the sowing of the seed in November, when the water of the inundation has retreated from the fields. With the Egyptians, as with many peoples of antiquity, the committing of the seed to the earth assumed the character of a solemn and mournful rite. On this subject I will let Plutarch speak for himself. "What," he asks, "are we to make of the gloomy, joyless, and mournful sacrifices, if it is wrong either to omit the established rites or to confuse and disturb our conceptions of the gods by absurd suspicions? For the Greeks also perform many rites which resemble those of the Egyptians and are observed about the same time. Thus at the festival of the Thesmophoria in Athens women sit on the ground and fast. And the Boeotians open the vaults of the Sorrowful One,<sup>2</sup> naming that festival sorrowful because Demeter is sorrowing for the descent of the Maiden. The month is the month of sowing about the setting of the Pleiades.<sup>3</sup> The Egyptians call it Athyr, the Athenians Pyanepsion, the Boeotians the month of Demeter. Theopompus informs us that the western peoples consider and call the winter Cronus, the summer Aphrodite, and the spring Proserpine, and they believe that all things are brought into being by Cronus and Aphrodite. The Phrygians imagine that the god sleeps in winter and wakes

The sowing of the seed in November.

Plutarch on the mournful character of the rites of sowing.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Auckland Colvin, *loc.*

*Dial. Meretr.* ii. pp. 275 sq. ed. H. Rabe.

<sup>2</sup> ἡ δὲ Ἀχάλας. Plutarch derives the name from ἄχος, "pain," "grief." But the etymology is uncertain. It has lately been proposed to derive the epithet from ἐχθρῶν, "nourishment." See M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig, 1906), p. 326. As to the vaults (*κύματα*) of Demeter see Pausanias, ix. 8. 1; Scholiast on Lucian,

<sup>3</sup> In antiquity the Pleiades set at dawn about the end of October or early in November. See L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 242; Aug. Mommsen, *Chronologie* (Leipzig, 1883), pp. 16, 27; G. F. Unger, in Iwan Müller's *Handbuch der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, i. 1 pp. 558, 585.

The sadness of autumn.

in summer, and accordingly<sup>1</sup> they celebrate with Bacchic rites the putting him to bed in winter and his awakening in summer. The Paphlagonians allege that he is bound fast and shut up in winter, but that he stirs and is set free in spring. And the season furnishes a hint that the sadness is for the hiding of those fruits of the earth which the ancients esteemed, not indeed gods, but great and necessary gifts bestowed by the gods in order that men might not lead the life of savages and of wild beasts. For it was that time of year when they saw some of the fruits vanishing and falling from the trees, while they sowed others grudgingly and with difficulty, scraping the earth with their hands and huddling it up again, on the uncertain chance that what they deposited in the ground would ever ripen and come to maturity. Thus they did in many respects like those who bury and mourn their dead. And just as we say that a purchaser of Plato's books purchases Plato, or that an actor who plays the comedies of Menander plays Menander, so the men of old did not hesitate to call the gifts and products of the gods by the names of the gods themselves, thereby honouring and glorifying the things on account of their utility. But in after ages simple folk in their ignorance applied to the gods statements which only held true of the fruits of the earth, and so they came not merely to say but actually to believe that the growth and decay of plants, on which they subsisted,<sup>1</sup> were the birth and the death of gods. Thus they fell into absurd, immoral, and confused ways of thinking, though all the while the absurdity of the fallacy was manifest. Hence Xenophanes of Colophon declared that if the Egyptians deemed their gods divine they should not weep for them, and that if they wept for them they should not deem them divine. 'For it is ridiculous,' said he, 'to lament and pray that the fruits would be good enough to grow and ripen again in order that they may again be eaten and lamented.' But he was wrong, for though the lamentations are for the fruits, the prayers are addressed to the gods, as the causes and givers of them, that they would be pleased to make fresh fruits to spring up instead of those that perish."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> τὰς καρποὺς τῶν θεῶν καὶ ἀπορροῖαν.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 69-71. With the sleep of the Phrygian



In this interesting passage Plutarch expresses his belief that the worship of the fruits of the earth was the result of a verbal misapprehension or disease of language, as it has been called by a modern school of mythologists, who explain the origin of myths in general on the same easy principle of metaphors misunderstood. Primitive man, on Plutarch's theory, firmly believed that the fruits of the earth on which he subsisted were not themselves gods but merely the gifts of the gods, who were the real givers of all good things. Yet at the same time men were in the habit of bestowing on these divine products the names of their divine creators, either out of gratitude or merely for the sake of brevity, as when we say that a man has bought a Shakespeare or acted Molière, when we mean that he has bought the works of Shakespeare or acted the plays of Molière. This abbreviated mode of expression was misunderstood in later times, and so people came to look upon the fruits of the earth as themselves divine instead of as being the work of divinities: in short, they mistook the creature for the creator. In like manner Plutarch would explain the Egyptian worship of animals as reverence done not so much to the beasts themselves as to the great god who displays his divine handiwork in sentient organisms even more than in the most beautiful and wonderful works of inanimate nature.<sup>1</sup>

Plutarch's view that the worship of the fruits of the earth sprang from a verbal misunderstanding.

The comparative study of religion has proved that these theories of Plutarch are an inversion of the truth. Fetishism, or the view that the fruits of the earth and things in general are divine or animated by powerful spirits, is not, as Plutarch imagined, a late corruption of a pure and primitive theism, which regarded the gods as the creators and givers of all good things. On the contrary, fetishism is early and theism is late in the history of mankind. In this respect Xenophanes, whom Plutarch attempts to correct, displayed a much truer insight into the mind of the savage. To weep crocodile

His theory is an inversion of the truth: for fetishism is the antecedent, not the corruption, of theism.

gods we may compare the sleep of Vishnu. The toils and anxieties of the Indian farmer "are continuous, and his only period of comparative rest is in the heavy rain time, when, as he says, the god Vishnu goes to sleep, and does not wake till October

is well advanced and the time has come to begin cutting and crushing the sugar-cane and boiling down the juice" (W. Crooke, *Natives of Northern India*, p. 139).

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 77.

Lamentations of the savage for the animals and plants which he kills and eats.

tears over the animals and plants which he kills and eats, and to pray them to come again in order that they may be again eaten and again lamented—this may seem absurd to us, but it is precisely what the savage does. And from his point of view the proceeding is not at all absurd but perfectly rational and well calculated to answer his ends. For he sincerely believes that animals and fruits are tenanted by spirits who can harm him if they please, and who cannot but be put to considerable inconvenience by that destruction of their bodies which is unfortunately inseparable from the processes of mastication and digestion. What more natural, therefore, than that the savage should offer excuses to the beasts and the fruits for the painful necessity he is under of consuming them, and that he should endeavour to alleviate their pangs by soft words and an air of respectful sympathy, in order that they may bear him no grudge, and may in due time come again to be again eaten and again lamented? Judged by the standard of primitive manners the attitude of the walrus to the oysters was strictly correct.

*"I weep for you," the Walrus said:  
 "I deeply sympathise."  
 With sobs and tears he sorted out  
 Those of the largest size,  
 Holding his pocket-handkerchief  
 Before his streaming eyes.*

Respect shown by savages for the fruits and the animals which they eat.

Many examples of such hypocritical lamentations for animals, drawn not from the fancy of a playful writer but from the facts of savage life, could be cited.<sup>1</sup> Here I shall quote the general statement of a writer on the Indians of British Columbia, because it covers the case of vegetable as well as of animal food. After describing the respectful welcome accorded by the Stlatlum Indians to the first "sock-eye" salmon which they have caught in the season, he goes on: "The significance of these ceremonies is easy to perceive when we remember the attitude of the Indians towards nature generally, and recall their myths relating to the salmon, and their coming to their rivers and streams. Nothing that the Indian of this region eats is regarded by

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 389 sqq. More examples will be given in the third edition of that book.



him as mere food and nothing more. Not a single plant, animal, or fish, or other object upon which he feeds, is looked upon in this light, or as something he has secured for himself by his own wit and skill. He regards it rather as something which has been voluntarily and compassionately placed in his hands by the goodwill and consent of the 'spirit' of the object itself, or by the intercession and magic of his culture-heroes; to be retained and used by him only upon the fulfilment of certain conditions. These conditions include respect and reverent care in the killing or plucking of the animal or plant and proper treatment of the parts he has no use for, such as the bones, blood, and offal; and the depositing of the same in some stream or lake, so that the object may by that means renew its life and physical form. The practices in connection with the killing of animals and the gathering of plants and fruits all make this quite clear, and it is only when we bear this attitude of the savage towards nature in mind that we can hope to rightly understand the motives and purposes of many of his strange customs and beliefs."<sup>1</sup>

We can now understand why among many peoples of antiquity, as Plutarch tells us, the time of sowing was a time of sorrow. The laying of the seed in the earth was a burial of the divine element, and it was fitting that like a human burial it should be performed with gravity and the semblance, if not the reality, of sorrow. Yet they sorrowed not without hope, perhaps a sure and certain hope, that the seed which they thus committed with sighs and tears to the ground would yet rise from the dust and yield fruit a hundredfold to the reaper. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."<sup>2</sup>

Thus the lamentations of the sower become intelligible.

<sup>1</sup> C. Hill Tout, "Report on the Ethnology of the Stlathum Indians of British Columbia," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) pp. 140 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxxvi. 5 sq. Firmicus Maternus asks the Egyptians (*De errore profanarum religionum*, ii. 7). "Cur plangitis fruges terrae et crescentia iugatis semina?"

§ 4. *Rites of Harvest*

Lamenta-  
tions of  
the  
Egyptian  
corn-  
reapers.

The Egyptian harvest, as we have seen, falls not in autumn but in spring, in the months of March, April, and May. To the husbandman the time of harvest, at least in a good year, must necessarily be a season of joy: in bringing home his sheaves he is requited for his long and anxious labours. Yet if the old Egyptian farmer felt a secret joy at reaping and garnering the grain, it was essential that he should conceal the natural emotion under an air of profound dejection. For was he not severing the body of the corn-god with his sickle and trampling it to pieces under the hoofs of his cattle on the threshing-floor? <sup>1</sup> Accordingly we are told that it was an ancient custom of the Egyptian corn-reapers to beat their breasts and lament over the first sheaf cut, while at the same time they called upon Isis. <sup>2</sup> The invocation seems to have taken the form of a melancholy chant, to which the Greeks gave the name of *Maneros*. Similar plaintive strains were chanted by corn-reapers in Phœnicia and other parts of Western Asia. <sup>3</sup> Probably all these doleful ditties were lamentations for the corn-god killed by the sickles of the reapers. In Egypt the slain deity was Osiris, and the name *Maneros* applied to the dirge appears to be derived from certain words meaning "Come to thy house," which often occur in the lamentations for the dead god. <sup>4</sup>

Similar  
ceremonies  
observed  
by the  
Cherokee  
Indians  
in the  
cultivation  
of the  
corn.

Ceremonies of the same sort have been observed by other peoples, probably for the same purpose. Thus we are told that among all vegetables corn (*selu*), by which is apparently meant maize, holds the first place in the household economy and the ceremonial observance of the Cherokee Indians, who invoke it under the name of "the

<sup>1</sup> As to the Egyptian modes of reaping and threshing see Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), ii. 419 sqq.; A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 572 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, ii. 79; Julius Pollux,

iv. 54; Pausanias, ix. 29. 7; Athenæus, xiv. 11 sq., pp. 618-620. As to these songs see *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 223 sq., 252, 257 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> H. Bragach, *Adonishlag und Linslied* (Berlin, 1852), p. 24, corrected by A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 336.



Old Woman" in allusion to a myth that it sprang from the blood of an old woman killed by her disobedient sons. "Much ceremony accompanied the planting and tending of the crop. Seven grains, the sacred number, were put into each hill, and these were not afterwards thinned out. After the last working of the crop, the priest and an assistant—generally the owner of the field—went into the field and built a small enclosure in the centre. Then entering it, they seated themselves upon the ground, with heads bent down, and while the assistant kept perfect silence the priest, with rattle in hand, sang songs of invocation to the spirit of the corn. Soon, according to the orthodox belief, a loud rustling would be heard outside, which they would know was caused by the 'Old Woman' bringing the corn into the field, but neither must look up until the song was finished. This ceremony was repeated on four successive nights, after which no one entered the field for seven other nights, when the priest himself went in, and, if all the sacred regulations had been properly observed, was rewarded by finding young ears upon the stalks. The corn ceremonies could be performed by the owner of the field himself, provided he was willing to pay a sufficient fee to the priest in order to learn the songs and ritual. Care was always taken to keep a clean trail from the field to the house, so that the corn might be encouraged to stay at home and not go wandering elsewhere. Most of these customs have now fallen into disuse excepting among the old people, by many of whom they are still religiously observed. Another curious ceremony, of which even the memory is now almost forgotten, was enacted after the first working of the corn, when the owner or priest stood in succession at each of the four corners of the field and wept and wailed loudly. Even the priests are now unable to give a reason for this performance, which may have been a lament for the bloody death of Selu," the Old Woman of the Corn.<sup>1</sup> In these Cherokee practices the lamentations and the invocations of the Old Woman of the Corn resemble the ancient Egyptian customs of lament-

The Old Woman of the corn and the laments for her death.

<sup>1</sup> J. Mooney, "Myths of the Cherokee," *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1900), pp.

423 *ff.* I do not know what precisely the writer means by "the last working of the crop" and "the first working of the corn."

ing over the first corn cut and calling upon Isis, herself probably an Old Woman of the Corn. Further, the Cherokee precaution of leaving a clear path from the field to the house resembles the Egyptian invitation to Osiris, "Come to thy house." So in the East Indies to this day people observe elaborate ceremonies for the purpose of bringing back the Soul of the Rice from the fields to the barn.<sup>1</sup>

Lamenta-  
tions of  
Indians at  
cutting  
sacred  
wood.

Just as the Egyptians lamented at cutting the corn, so the Karok Indians of California lament at hewing the sacred wood for the fire in the assembly-room. The wood must be cut from a tree on the top of the highest hill. In lopping off the boughs the Indian weeps and sobs piteously, shedding real tears, and at the top of the tree he leaves two branches and a top-knot, resembling a man's head and outstretched arms. Having descended from the tree, he binds the wood in a faggot and carries it back to the assembly-room, blubbering all the way. If he is asked why he thus weeps at cutting and fetching the sacred fuel, he will either give no answer or say simply that he does it for luck.<sup>2</sup> We may suspect that his real motive is to appease the wrath of the tree-spirit, many of whose limbs he has amputated, though he took care to leave him two arms and a head.

Arab  
ceremony  
of burying  
"the old  
man" at  
harvest.

The conception of the corn-spirit as old and dead at harvest is very clearly embodied in an Arab custom. When the harvesters have nearly finished their task and only a small corner of the field remains to be reaped, the owner takes a handful of wheat tied up in a sheaf. A hole is dug in the form of a grave, and two stones are set upright, one at the head and the other at the foot, just as in an ordinary burial. Then the sheaf of wheat is laid at the bottom of the grave, and the sheikh pronounces these words, "The old man is dead." Earth is afterwards thrown in to cover the sheaf, with a prayer, "May Allah bring us back the wheat of the dead."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 196 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. A. Janssen, "Costumes

Arabes," *Revue Biblique*, 1<sup>re</sup> avril 1903, p. 258. The customs reported in this article are practised by the Arabs in the neighbourhood of Mádabá and Kérak.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE OFFICIAL FESTIVALS OF OSIRIS

#### § 1. *The Festival at Sais*

SUCH, then, were the principal events of the farmer's calendar in ancient Egypt, and such the simple religious rites by which he celebrated them. But we have still to consider the Osirian festivals of the official calendar, so far as these are described by Greek writers or recorded on the monuments. In examining them it is necessary to bear in mind that on account of the movable year of the old Egyptian calendar the true or astronomical dates of the official festivals must have varied from year to year, at least until the adoption of the fixed Alexandrian year in 30 B.C. From that time onward, apparently, the dates of the festivals were determined by the new calendar, and so ceased to rotate throughout the length of the solar year. At all events Plutarch, writing about the end of the first century, implies that they were then fixed, not movable; for though he does not mention the Alexandrian calendar, he clearly dates the festivals by it.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the long festal calendar of

With the adoption of the Alexandrian year in 30 B.C. the Egyptian festivals ceased to rotate through the natural year.

<sup>1</sup> Thus with regard to the Egyptian month of Athyr he tells us that the sun was then in the sign of the Scorpion (*Isis et Osiris*, 13), that Athyr corresponded to the Athenian month Pyanepsion and the Boeotian month Damatrius (*op. cit.* 69), that it was the month of sowing (*ib.*), that in it the Nile sank, the earth was laid bare by the retreat of the inundation, the leaves fell, and the nights grew longer than the days (*op. cit.* 39). These indications agree on the whole

with the date of Athyr in the Alexandrian calendar, namely October 28–November 26. Again, he says (*op. cit.* 43) that the festival of the beginning of spring was held at the new moon of the month Phamenoth, which, in the Alexandrian calendar, corresponded to February 24–March 26. Further, he tells us that a festival was celebrated on the 23rd of Phaophi after the autumn equinox (*op. cit.* 52), and in the Alexandrian calendar Phaophi began on September 28,

Esne, an important document of the Imperial age, is obviously based on the fixed Alexandrian year; for it assigns the mark for New Year's Day to the day which corresponds to the twenty-ninth of August, which was the first day of the Alexandrian year, and its references to the rising of the Nile, the position of the sun, and the operations of agriculture are all in harmony with this supposition.<sup>1</sup> Thus we may take it as fairly certain that from 30 B.C. onwards the Egyptian festivals were stationary in the solar year.

Herodotus tells us that the grave of Osiris was at Sais in Lower Egypt, and that there was a lake there upon which the sufferings of the god were displayed as a mystery by night.<sup>2</sup> This commemoration of the divine passion was held once a year: the people mourned and beat their breasts at it to testify their sorrow for the death of the god; and an image of a cow, made of gilt wood with a golden sun between its horns, was carried out of the chamber in which it stood the rest of the year.<sup>3</sup> The cow no doubt represented Isis herself, for cows were sacred to her, and she was regularly depicted with the horns of a cow on her head.<sup>4</sup> It is probable that the carrying out of her cow-shaped image symbolised the goddess searching for the dead body of Osiris; for this was the native Egyptian interpretation of a similar ceremony observed in Plutarch's time about the winter solstice, when the gilt cow was carried seven times round the temple.<sup>5</sup> A great feature of the festival was the nocturnal illumination. People fastened rows of oil-lamps to the outside of their houses, and the lamps burned all

The sufferings of Osiris displayed as a mystery at Sais.

The illumination of houses throughout

a few days after the autumn equinox. Once more, he observes that another festival was held after the spring equinox (*op. cit.* 65), which implies the use of a fixed solar year. See G. Parthey in his edition of Plutarch's *Isis et Osiris*, pp. 165-169.

<sup>1</sup> H. Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie*, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, ii. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, ii. 129-132.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, ii. 41, with Prof. A. Wiedemann's note (*Herodots zweites Buch*, pp. 187 *sqq.*); Diodorus Siculus, i. 11. 4; Aelian, *De natura*

*animalium*, x. 27; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 19 and 39. According to Prof. Wiedemann "the Egyptian name of the cow of Isis was *het-s*, and this is one of the rare cases in which the name of the sacred animal agrees with that of the deity." *Hest* was the usual Egyptian form of the name which the Greeks and Romans represented as Isis. See R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 813 *sqq.*

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 52. The interpretation is accepted by Prof. A. Wiedemann (*Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 482).



night long. The custom was not confined to Sais, but was observed throughout the whole of Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

This universal illumination of the houses on one night of the year suggests that the festival may have been a commemoration not merely of the dead Osiris but of the dead in general, in other words, that it may have been a night of All Souls.<sup>2</sup> For it is a widespread belief that the souls of the dead revisit their old homes on one night of the year; and on that solemn occasion people prepare for the reception of the ghosts by laying out food for them to eat, and lighting lamps to guide them on their darkling road from and to the grave. The following instances will illustrate the custom.

Egypt on the night of the festival suggests that the rite was a Feast of All Souls.

## § 2. Feasts of All Souls

The Esquimaux of St. Michael and the lower Yukon River in Alaska hold a festival of the dead every year at the end of November or the beginning of December, as well as a greater festival at intervals of several years. At these seasons food, drink, and clothes are provided for the returning ghosts in the *kashim* or clubhouse of the village, which is illuminated with oil lamps. Every man or woman who wishes to honour a dead friend sets up a lamp on a stand in front of the place which the deceased used to occupy in the clubhouse. These lamps, filled with seal oil, are kept burning day and night till the festival is over. They are believed to light the shades on their return to their old home and back again to the land of the dead. If any one fails to put up a lamp in the clubhouse and to keep it burning, the shade whom he or she desires to honour could not find its way to the place and so would miss the

Annual festival of the dead among the Esquimaux.

The lighting of the lamps for the dead.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 62. In one of the Hibeh papyri (No. 27, lines 165-167) mention is made of the festival and of the lights which were burned throughout the district. See *The Hibeh Papyri*, part i., ed. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt (London, 1906), p. 149 (pointed out to me by Mr. W. Wyse). In the papyrus the festival is said to have been held in honour of Athena (*i.e.* Neith), the great goddess of Sais, who

was there identified with Isis. See A. Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, pp. 77 sq.

<sup>2</sup> In the period of the Middle Kingdom the Egyptians of Siat used to light lamps for the dead on the last day and the first day of the year (A. Erman, in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1882, p. 164; *id.*, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 434 sq.).

Esquimaux  
festival of  
the dead.

On the eve of the festival the nearest male relation goes to the grave and summons the ghost by planting there a small model of a seal spear or of a wooden dish, according as the deceased was a man or a woman. The totems of the dead are marked on these implements. When all is ready, the ghosts gather in the fire-pit under the clubhouse, and ascending through the floor at the proper moment take possession of the bodies of their namesakes, to whom the offerings of food, drink, and clothing are made for the benefit of the dead. Thus each shade obtains the supplies he needs in the other world. The dead who have none to make offerings to them are believed to suffer great destitution. Hence the Esquimaux fear to die without leaving behind them some one who will sacrifice to their spirits, and childless people generally adopt children lest their shades should be forgotten at the festivals. When a person has been much disliked, his ghost is sometimes purposely ignored, and that is deemed the severest punishment that could be inflicted upon him. After the songs of invitation to the dead have been sung, the givers of the feast take a small portion of food from every dish and cast it down as an offering to the shades; then each pours a little water on the floor so that it runs through the cracks. In this way they believe that the spiritual essence of all the food and water is conveyed to the souls. The remainder of the food is afterwards distributed among the people present, who eat of it heartily. Then with songs and dances the feast comes to an end, and the ghosts are dismissed to their own place. Dances form a conspicuous feature of the great festival of the dead, which is held every few years. The dancers dance not only in the clubhouse but also at the graves and on the ice, if the deceased met their death by drowning.<sup>1</sup>

The Indians of California used to observe annual ceremonies of mourning for the dead,<sup>2</sup> at some of which the souls of the departed were represented by living persons. Ten or more men would prepare themselves to play the part of the ghosts by fasting for several days, especially by abstaining

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Nelson, "The Eskimo about Bering Strait," *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*,

pt. I (Washington, 1899) p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, pp. 328, 355, 356, 384.

Annual  
festivals  
of the dead  
among the  
Indians of  
California.



from flesh. Disguised with paint and soot, adorned with feathers and grasses, they danced and sang in the village or rushed about in the forest by night with burning torches in their hands. After a time they presented themselves to the relations of the deceased, who looked upon these maskers as in very truth their departed friends and received them accordingly with an outburst of lamentation, the old women scratching their own faces and smiting their breasts with stones in token of mourning. These masquerades were generally held in February. During their continuance a strict fast was observed in the village.<sup>1</sup> Among the Konkaus of California the dance of the dead is always held about the end of August and marks their New Year's Day. They collect a large quantity of food, clothing, baskets, ornaments, and whatever else the spirits are supposed to need in the other world. These they hang on a semicircle of boughs or small trees, cut and set in the ground leafless. In the centre burns a great fire, and hard by are the graves. The ceremony begins at evening and lasts till daybreak. As darkness falls, men and women sit on the graves and wail for the dead of the year. Then they dance round the fire with frenzied yells and whoops, casting from time to time the offerings into the flames. All must be consumed before the first faint streaks of dawn glimmer in the East.<sup>2</sup>

The Miztecs of Mexico believed that the souls of the dead came back in the twelfth month of every year, which corresponded to our November. On this day of All Souls the houses were decked out to welcome the spirits. Jars of food and drink were set on a table in the principal room, and the family went forth with torches to meet the ghosts and invite them to enter. Then returning themselves to the house they knelt around the table, and with eyes bent on the ground prayed the souls to accept of the offerings and

Annual festival of the dead among the Miztecs of Mexico.

<sup>1</sup> Kostromitonow, "Bemerkungen über die Indianer in Ober-Kalifornien," in Baer and Helmersen's *Beiträge zur Kenntniss des russischen Reiches*, i. (St. Petersburg, 1839) pp. 88 sq. The natives of the western islands of Torres Straits used to hold a great death-dance at which disguised men personated the ghosts of the lately

deceased, mimicking their characteristic gait and gestures. Women and children were supposed to take these mummers for real ghosts. See A. C. Haddon, in *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, v. 252-256.

<sup>2</sup> S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, pp. 437 sq.

to procure the blessings of the gods upon the family. Thus they remained on bended knees and with downcast eyes till the morning, not daring to look at the table lest they should offend the spirits by spying on them at their meal. With the first beams of the sun they rose, glad at heart. The jars of food which had been presented to the dead were given to the poor or deposited in a secret place.<sup>1</sup> The Indians of Santiago Tepehuacan believe that the souls of their dead return to them on the night of the eighteenth of October, the festival of St. Luke, and they sweep the roads in order that the ghosts may find them clean on their passage.<sup>2</sup>

Annual  
festival of  
the dead  
in Sumba.

Again, the natives of Sumba, an East Indian island, celebrate a New Year's festival, which is at the same time a festival of the dead. The graves are in the middle of the village, and at a given moment all the people repair to them and raise a loud weeping and wailing. Then after indulging for a short time in the national pastimes they disperse to their houses, and every family calls upon its dead to come back. The ghosts are believed to hear and accept the invitation. Accordingly betel and areca nuts are set out for them. Victims, too, are sacrificed in front of every house, and their hearts and livers are offered with rice to the dead. After a decent interval these portions are distributed amongst the living, who consume them and banquet gaily on flesh and rice, a rare event in their frugal lives. Then they play, dance, and sing to their heart's content, and the festival which began so lugubriously ends by being the merriest of the year. A little before daybreak the invisible guests take their departure. All the people turn out of their houses to escort them a little way. Holding in one hand the half of a cocoa-nut, which contains a small packet of provisions for the dead, and in the other hand a piece of smouldering wood, they march in procession, singing a

<sup>1</sup> Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique-Centrale*, iii. 23 sq.; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, ii. 623. Similar customs are still practised by the Indians of a great part of Mexico and Central

America (Brasseur de Bourbourg, *op. cit.* iii. 24, note 1).

<sup>2</sup> "Lettre du curé de Santiago Tepehuacan à son évêque," *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Paris), II<sup>me</sup> Série, ii. (1834) p. 179.



drawling song to the accompaniment of a gong and waving the lighted brands in time to the music. So they move through the darkness till with the last words of the song they throw away the cocoa-nuts and the brands in the direction of the spirit-land, leaving the ghosts to wend their way thither, while they themselves return to the village.<sup>1</sup>

The Bghais, a Karen tribe of Burmah, hold an annual feast for the dead at the new moon which falls near the end of August or the beginning of September. All the villagers who have lost relatives within the last three years take part in it. Food and drink are set out on tables for the ghosts, and new clothes for them are hung up in the room. All being ready, the people beat gongs and begin to weep. Each one calls upon the relation whom he has lost to come and eat. When the dead are thought to have arrived, the living address them, saying, "You have come to me, you have returned to me. It has been raining hard, and you must be wet. Dress yourselves, clothe yourselves with these new garments, and all the companions that are with you. Eat betel together with all that accompany you, all your friends and associates, and the long dead. Call them all to eat and drink." The ghosts having finished their repast, the people dry their tears and sit down to eat what is left. More food is then prepared and put into a basket, and at cock-crow next morning the contents of the basket are thrown out of the house, while the living weep and call upon their dead as before.<sup>2</sup> The Hkamies, a hill tribe of North Aracan, hold an important festival every year in honour of departed spirits. It falls after harvest and is called "the opening of the house of the dead." When a person dies and has been burnt, the ashes are collected and placed in a small house in the forest together with his spear or gun, which has first been broken. These little huts are generally arranged in groups near a village, and are some-

Annual  
festival of  
the dead  
among the  
Bghais and  
Hkamies.

<sup>1</sup> S. Roos, "Bijdrage tot de kennis van taal, land en volk op het eiland Soemba," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, xxxvi. (1872) pp. 63-65.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. F. Mason, D.D., "Physical Character of the Katens," *Journal of*

*the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1866, part ii. pp. 29-39. Lights are not mentioned by the writer, but the festival being nocturnal we may assume that they are used for the convenience of the living as well as of the dead. In other respects the ceremonies are typical.

times large enough to be mistaken for one. After harvest all the relations of the deceased cook various kinds of food and take them with pots of liquor distilled from rice to the village of the dead. There they open the doors of the houses, and having placed the food and drink inside they shut them again. After that they weep, eat, drink, and return home.<sup>1</sup>

Annual  
festival of  
the dead in  
Cambodia.

The great festival of the dead in Cambodia takes place on the last day of the month Phatrabot (September-October), but ever since the moon began to wane everybody has been busy preparing for it. In every house cakes and sweetmeats are set out, candles burn, incense sticks smoke, and the whole is offered to the ancestral shades with an invocation which is thrice repeated: "O all you our ancestors who are departed, deign to come and eat what we have prepared for you, and to bless your posterity and make it happy." Fifteen days afterwards many little boats are made of bark and filled with rice, cakes, small coins, smoking incense-sticks, and lighted candles. At evening these are set floating on the river, and the souls of the dead embark in them to return to their own place. The living now bid them farewell. "Go to the lands," they say, "go to the fields you inhabit, to the mountains, under the stones which are your abodes. Go away! return! In due time your sons and your grandsons will think of you. Then you will return, you will return, you will return." The river is now covered with twinkling points of fire. But the current soon bears them away, and as they vanish one by one in the darkness the souls depart with them to the far country.<sup>2</sup>

Annual  
festival of  
the dead in  
Tonquin.

In Tonquin, as in Sumba, the dead revisit their kinsfolk and their old homes at the New Year. From the hour of midnight, when the New Year begins, no one dares to shut the door of his house for fear of excluding the ghosts, who

<sup>1</sup> R. F. St. Andrew St. John, "A Short Account of the Hill Tribes of North Aracan," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, ii. (1873) p. 238. At this festival the dead are apparently not supposed to return to the houses.

<sup>2</sup> E. Aymonier, *Notice sur le Cambodge* (Paris, 1875), p. 59; A. Leclère,

*Le Bouddhisme au Cambodge* (Paris, 1899), pp. 374-376. The departure of the souls is described only by the latter writer. Compare E. Aymonier, "Notes sur les coutumes et croyances superstitieuses des Cambodgiens," *Cochinchine Française, Excursions et Reconnaissances*, No. 16 (Saigon, 1883), pp. 205 *sp.*



begin to arrive at that time. Preparations have been made to welcome and refresh them after their long journey. Beds and mats are ready for their weary bodies to repose upon, water to wash their dusty feet, slippers to comfort them, and canes to support their feeble steps. Candles burn on the domestic altar, and pastilles diffuse a fragrant odour. The people bow before the unseen visitors and beseech them to remember and bless their descendants in the coming year. Having discharged this pious duty they abstain from sweeping the houses for three days lest the dust should incommode the ghosts.<sup>1</sup> In Annam one of the most important festivals of the year is the festival of Têt, which falls on the first day of the New Year. The house of the head of the family is then decked with flowers, and in the room which serves as a domestic chapel the altar of the ancestors is surrounded with flowers, among which the lotus, the emblem of immortality, is most conspicuous. On a table are set red candles, perfumes, incense, sandal-wood, and plates full of bananas, oranges, and other fruits. The relations crouch before the altar, and kneeling at the foot of it the head of the house invokes the name of the family which he represents. Then in solemn tones he recites an incantation, mentioning the names of his most illustrious ancestors and marking time with the strokes of a hammer upon a gong, while crackers are exploded outside the room. After that, he implores the ancestral shades to protect their descendants and invites them to a repast, which is spread for them on a table. Round this table he walks, serving the invisible guests with his own hands. He distributes to them smoking balls of rice in little china saucers, and pours tea or spirits into each little cup, while he murmurs words of invitation and compliment. When the ghosts have eaten and drunk their fill, the head of the family returns to the altar and salutes them for the last time. Finally, he takes leaves of yellow paper, covered with gold and silver spangles, and throws them into a brasier placed at the foot of the ancestral tablets. These papers represent imaginary bars of gold and silver which

Annual  
festivals of  
the dead in  
Annam  
and  
Cochin-  
china.

<sup>1</sup> Mariny, *Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tunquin et de Lao* (Paris, 1666), pp. 251-253.

the living send to the dead. Cardboard models of houses, furniture, jewels, clothes, of everything in short that the ghosts can need in the other world, are despatched to them in like manner in the flames. Then the family sits down to table and feasts on the remains of the ghostly banquet.<sup>1</sup> In Cochinchina the ancestral spirits are similarly propitiated and fed on the first day of the New Year. The tablets which represent them are placed on the domestic altar, and the family prostrate themselves before these emblems of the departed. The head of the family lights sticks of incense on the altar and prays the shades of his forefathers to accept the offerings and be favourable to their descendants. With great gravity he waits upon the ghosts, passing dishes of food before the ancestral tablets and pouring out wine and tea to slake the thirst of the spirits. When the dead are supposed to be satisfied with the shadowy essence of the food, the living partake of its gross material substance.<sup>2</sup>

Annual  
festivals of  
the dead in  
Siam and  
Japan.

In Siam and Japan also the souls of the dead revisit their families for three days in every year, and the lamps which the Japanese kindle in multitudes on that occasion to light the spirits on their way have procured for the festival the name of the Feast of Lanterns. It is to be observed that in Siam, as in Tonquin and Sumba, the return of the ghosts takes place at the New Year.<sup>3</sup>

Annual  
festivals of  
the dead  
among the  
Chevours  
and  
Armenians.

The Chevours of the Caucasus believe that the souls of the departed revisit their old homes on the Saturday night of the second week in Lent. This gathering of the dead is called the "Assembly of Souls." The people spare no expense to treat the unseen guests handsomely. Beer is brewed and loaves of various shapes baked specially for the occasion.<sup>4</sup> The Armenians celebrate the memory of the dead on many days of the year, burning incense and lighting tapers in their honour. One of their customs is to keep a "light of the dead" burning all night in the house in order that the ghosts may be able to enter. For if the

<sup>1</sup> P. d'Enjoy, in *Bulletin de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, V<sup>e</sup> Série, iv. (1903) pp. 500-502.

<sup>2</sup> L. E. Louvet, *La Cochinchine religieuse* (Paris, 1885), pp. 149-151.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 85-87.

<sup>4</sup> C. v. Hahn, "Religiöse Anschauungen und Totengedächtnisfeier der Chevours," *Globus*, lxxvi. (1899) pp. 211 sq.



spirits find the house dark, they spit down the chimney and depart, cursing the churlish inmates.<sup>1</sup>

The Barea and apparently the Kunama, two heathen tribes who lead a settled agricultural life to the north of Abyssinia, celebrate every year a festival in the month of November. It is a festival of thanksgiving for the completion of the harvest, and at the same time a commemoration and propitiation of the dead. Every house prepares much beer for the occasion, and a small pot of beer is set out for each deceased member of the household. After standing for two days in the house the beer which was devoted to the dead is drunk by the living. At these festivals all the people of a district meet in a special place, and there pass the time in games and dances. Among the Barea the festive gatherings are held in a sacred grove. We are told that "he who owes another a drubbing on this day can pay his debt with impunity; for it is a day of peace when all feuds are in abeyance." Wild honey may not be gathered till the festival has been held.<sup>2</sup> Apparently the festival is a sort of Saturnalia, such as is celebrated elsewhere at the end of harvest.<sup>3</sup> At that season there is food and to spare for the dead as well as the living.

Annual festival of the dead among the Barea.

Similar beliefs survive to this day in many parts of Europe and find expression in similar customs. The day of the dead or of All Souls, as we call it, is commonly the second of November. Thus in Lower Brittany the souls of the departed come to visit the living on the eve of that day. After vespers are over, the priests and choir walk in procession, "the procession of the charnel-house," chanting a weird dirge in the Breton tongue. Then the people go home, gather round the fire, and talk of the departed. The housewife covers the kitchen table with a white cloth, sets out cider, curds, and hot pancakes on it, and retires with the family to rest. The fire on the hearth is kept up by a huge log known as "the log of the dead" (*kef ann Anaon*). Soon doleful voices outside in the darkness break the stillness of night. It is the "singers of death" who go

Feast of All Souls in Brittany and other parts of France.

<sup>1</sup> M. Abeghian, *Der armenische Volksglaube* (Leipzig, 1899), pp. 23-29.

<sup>2</sup> W. Munzinger, *Ostafrikanische Studien* (Schaffhausen, 1864), p. 473.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 118 sq.

about the streets waking the sleepers by a wild and melancholy song, in which they remind the living in their comfortable beds to pray for the poor souls in pain. All that night the dead warm themselves at the hearth and feast on the viands prepared for them. Sometimes the awe-struck listeners hear the stools creaking in the kitchen, or the dead leaves outside rustling under the ghostly footsteps.<sup>1</sup> In the Vosges Mountains on All Souls' Eve the solemn sound of the church bells invites good Christians to pray for the repose of the dead. While the bells are ringing, it is customary in some families to uncover the beds and open the windows, doubtless in order to let the poor souls enter and rest. No one that evening would dare to remain deaf to the appeal of the bells. The prayers are prolonged to a late hour of the night. When the last *De profundis* has been uttered, the head of the family gently covers up the beds, sprinkles them with holy water, and shuts the windows. In some villages fire is kept up on the hearth and a basket of nuts is placed beside it for the use of the ghosts.<sup>2</sup> Again, in some parts of Saintonge and Anis a Candlemas candle used to be lit before the domestic crucifix on All Souls' Day at the very hour when the last member of the family departed this life; and some people, just as in Tonquin, refrained from sweeping the house that day lest they should thereby disturb the ghostly visitors.<sup>3</sup>

Feast of  
All Souls  
in Belgium,  
the Tyrol,  
and  
Bohemia.

In Bruges, Dinant, and other towns of Belgium holy candles burn all night in the houses on the Eve of All Souls, and the bells toll till midnight, or even till morning. People, too, often set lighted candles on the graves. At Scherpenheuvel the houses are illuminated, and the people walk in procession carrying lighted candles in their hands. A very common custom in Belgium is to eat "soul-cakes" or "soul-bread" on the eve or the day of All Souls. The

<sup>1</sup> A. le Braz, *La Légende de la Mort en Basse-Bretagne* (Paris, 1893), pp. 286-287. Compare J. Lecoq, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, il. 283 sq.

<sup>2</sup> L. F. Sauvé, *Le folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, pp. 295 sq.

<sup>3</sup> J. L. M. Noguès, *Les moeurs*

*d'autrefois en Saintonge et en Anis*, p. 76. As to the observance of All Souls' Day in other parts of France see A. Meyrac, *Traditions, coutumes, légendes et contes des Ardennes*, pp. 22-24; Ch. Beauquier, *Les mois en Franche-Comté*, pp. 123-125.



eating of them is believed to benefit the dead in some way. Perhaps originally, as among the Esquimaux of Alaska to this day,<sup>1</sup> the ghosts were thought to enter into the bodies of their relatives and so to share the victuals which the survivors consumed. Similarly at festivals in honour of the dead in Northern India it is customary to feed Brahmans, and the food which these holy men partake of is believed to pass to the deceased and to refresh their languid spirits.<sup>2</sup> The same idea of eating and drinking by proxy may perhaps partly explain many other funeral feasts. Be that as it may, at Dixmude and elsewhere in Belgium they say that you deliver a soul from Purgatory for every cake you eat. At Antwerp they give a local colour to the soul-cakes by baking them with plenty of saffron, the deep yellow tinge being suggestive of the flames of Purgatory. People in Antwerp at the same season are careful not to slam doors or windows for fear of hurting the ghosts.<sup>3</sup> In the Tyrol "soul-lights," that is, lamps filled with lard or butter, are lighted and placed on the hearth on All Souls' Eve in order that the poor souls, escaped from the fires of Purgatory, may anoint their burns with the melted grease and so alleviate their pangs. Some people also leave milk and dough-nuts for them on the table all night. The graves, too, are decked with flowers and illuminated with wax candles.<sup>4</sup> Similar customs are observed at the same season in Bohemia, where children besides kindle small wax-lights which have been specially bought for the day.<sup>5</sup>

The Letts used to entertain and feed the souls of the

<sup>1</sup> Above, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> W. Crooke, *The Natives of Northern India*, p. 219.

<sup>3</sup> Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Calendrier Belge*, ii. 236-240; *id.*, *Das festliche Jahr*, pp. 229 sq. Soul-cakes are also eaten on this day in South Germany and Austria. They are baked of white flour, and are of a longish rounded shape with two small tips at each end (*Das festliche Jahr*, p. 330). As to these soul-cakes see also K. von Leo-prochting, *Aus dem Lechrain* (Munich, 1855), pp. 199 sq.; A. Birlinger, *Volks-thümliches aus Schwaben*, ii. 167 sq.

<sup>4</sup> I. v. Zingerle, *Sitten, Bräuche und Meinungen des Tiroler Volkes*,<sup>2</sup> pp. 176-178. In the Italian Tyrol some people set pitchers of water in the kitchen on All Souls' night that the souls may slake their thirst. See Ch. Schneller, *Märchen und Sagen aus Wälschtirol*, p. 238. In Baden the inhabitants of many villages, Protestant as well as Catholic, still deck the graves with flowers and lights on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. See E. H. Meyer, *Badisches Volksleben* (Strasburg, 1900), p. 601.

<sup>5</sup> Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Fest-kalender aus Böhmen*, pp. 493-495.

Annual  
festivals of  
the dead  
among the  
Letts and  
Samagiti-  
ans.

dead for four weeks from Michaelmas (September 29) to the day of St. Simon and St. Jude (October 28). They called the season *Wellalaick* or *Semlicka*, and regarded it as so holy that while it lasted they would not willingly thresh the corn, alleging that grain threshed at that time would be useless for sowing, since the souls of the dead would not allow it to sprout. But we may suspect that the original motive of the abstinence was a fear lest the blows of the flails should fall upon the poor ghosts swarming in the air. At this season the people were wont to prepare food of all sorts for the spirits and set it on the floor of a room, which had been well heated and swept for the purpose. Late in the evening the master of the house went into the room, tended the fire, and called upon his dead kinsfolk by their names to come and eat and drink. If he saw the ghosts, he would die within the year; but if he did not see them he would outlive it. When he thought the souls had eaten and drunk enough, he took the staff which served as a poker and laying it on the threshold cut it in two with an axe. At the same time he bade the spirits go their way, charging them to keep to the roads and paths and not to tread upon the rye. If the crops turned out ill next year, the people laid the failure at the door of the ghosts, who fancied themselves scurvily treated and had taken their revenge by trampling down the corn.<sup>1</sup> The Samagitians annually invited the dead to come from their graves and enjoy a bath and a feast. For their entertainment they prepared a special hut, in which they set out food and drink, together with a seat and a napkin for every soul who had been invited. They left the souls to revel by themselves for three days in the hut; then they deposited the remains of the banquet on the graves and bade the ghosts farewell. The good things, however, were usually consumed by charcoal-burners in the forest. This feast of the dead fell early in November.<sup>2</sup> The Esthonians prepare

<sup>1</sup> P. Einhorn, in *Scriptores Rerum Livonicarum*, ii. (Riga and Leipsic, 1848) pp. 587, 598, 630 sq., 645 sq. See also the description of D. Fabricius in his "Livonicae Historiae compendiosa series," *ib.* p. 441. Fabricius

assigns the custom to All Souls' Day.

<sup>2</sup> J. Lasicus, "De diis Samagitarum caeterorumque Sarmatarum," in *Magazin herausgegeben von der lettisch-literarischen Gesellschaft*, xiv. 1 (Mitau, 1868), p. 92.



a meal for their dead on All Souls' Day, the second of November, and invite them by their names to come and partake of it. The ghosts arrive in the early morning at the first cock-crow, and depart at the second, being ceremoniously lighted out of the house by the head of the family, who waves a white cloth after them and bids them come again next year.<sup>1</sup>

In some parts of the Russian Government of Olonets the inhabitants of a village sometimes celebrate a joint festival in honour of all their dead. Having chosen a house for the purpose, they spread three tables, one outside the front door, one in the passage, and one in the room which is heated by a stove. Then they go out to meet their unseen guests and usher them into the house with these words, "Ye are tired, our own ones; take something to eat." The ghosts accordingly refresh themselves at each table in succession. Then the master of the house bids them warm themselves at the stove, remarking that they must have grown cold in the damp earth. After that the living guests sit down to eat at the tables. Towards the end of the meal the host opens the window and lets the ghosts gently out of it by means of the shroud in which they were lowered into the grave. As they slide down it from the warm room into the outer air, the people tell them, "Now it is time for you to go home, and your feet must be tired; the way is not a little one for you to travel. Here it is softer for you. Now, in God's name, farewell!"<sup>2</sup> Among the Votiaks of Russia every family sacrifices to its dead once a year in the week before Palm Sunday. The sacrifice is offered in the house about midnight. Flesh, bread, or cakes and beer are set on the table, and on the floor beside the table stands a trough of bark with a lighted wax candle stuck on the rim. The master of the house, having covered his head with his hat, takes a piece of meat in his hand and says, "Ye spirits of the long departed, guard and preserve us well. Make none of us cripples. Send no plagues upon

Annual  
festival of  
the dead  
in Russia.

Festivals of  
the dead  
among the  
Votiaks  
of Russia.

<sup>1</sup> F. J. Wiedemann, *Aus dem inneren und äussern Leben der Ehisten*, pp. 366 sq.; Boecler-Kreutzwald, *Der Ehisten abergläubische Gebräuche, Weisen und Gewohnheiten*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 321 sq. The date of the festival is not mentioned. Apparently it is celebrated at irregular intervals.

Festivals of  
the dead  
among the  
Votiaks.

us. Cause the corn, the wine, and the food to prosper with us."<sup>1</sup> The Votiaks of the Governments of Wjatka and Kasan celebrate two memorial festivals of the dead every year, one in autumn and the other in spring. On a certain day koumiss is distilled, beer brewed, and potato scones baked in every house. All the members of a clan, who trace their descent through women from one mythical ancestress, assemble in a single house, generally in one which lies at the boundary of the clan land. Here an old man moulds wax candles; and when the requisite number is made he sticks them on the shelf of the stove, and begins to mention the dead relations of the master of the house by name. For each of them he crumbles a piece of bread, gives each of them a piece of pancake, pours koumiss and beer, and puts a spoonful of soup into a trough made for the purpose. All persons present whose parents are dead follow his example. The dogs are then allowed to eat out of the trough. If they eat quietly, it is a sign that the dead live at peace; if they do not eat quietly, it argues the contrary. Then the company sit down to table and partake of the meal. Next morning both the dead and the living refresh themselves with a drink, and a fowl is boiled. The proceedings are the same as on the evening before. But now they treat the souls for the last time as a preparation for their journey, saying: "Eat, drink, and go home to your companions. Live at peace, be gracious to us, keep our children, guard our corn, our beasts and birds." Then the people banquet and indulge in all sorts of improprieties. The women refrain from feasting until the dead have taken their departure; but when the souls are gone, there is no longer any motive for abstinence, the koumiss circulates freely among the women, and they grow wanton. Yet at this, as at every other festival, the men and women eat in different parts of the room.<sup>2</sup>

Fest of  
All Souls  
in the  
Abruzzi.

On All Saints' Day, the first of November, shops and streets in the Abruzzi are filled with candles, which people

<sup>1</sup> M. Buch, *Die Wotyaken* (Stuttgart, 1882), p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> J. Wasiljev, *Übersicht über die heidnischen Gebräuche, Aberglauben*

*und Religion der Wotjaken* (Helsingfors, 1902), pp. 34 *sq.* (*Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne*, xviii.). As to the Votiak clans see the same work, pp. 42-44.



buy in order to kindle them in the evening on the graves of their relations. For all the dead come to visit their homes that night, the Eve of All Souls, and they need lights to show them the way. For their use, too, lights are kept burning in the houses all night. Before people go to sleep they place on the table a lighted lamp or candle and a frugal meal of bread and water. The dead issue from their graves and stalk in procession through every street of the village. You can see them if you stand at a cross-road with your chin resting on a forked stick. First pass the souls of the good, and then the souls of the murdered and the damned. Once, they say, a man was thus peeping at the ghastly procession. The good souls told him he had better go home. He did not, and when he saw the tail of the procession he died of fright.<sup>1</sup>

A comparison of these European customs with the similar heathen rites can leave no room for doubt that the nominally Christian feast of All Souls is nothing but an old pagan festival of the dead which the Church, unable or unwilling to suppress, resolved from motives of policy to connive at. But whence did it borrow the practice of solemnising the festival on that particular day, the second of November? In order to answer this question we should observe, first, that celebrations of this sort are often held at the beginning of a New Year,<sup>2</sup> and, second, that the peoples of North-western Europe, the Celts and the Teutons, appear to have dated the beginning of their year from the beginning of winter, the Celts reckoning it from the first of November<sup>3</sup> and the Teutons from the first of October.<sup>4</sup> The difference of reckoning may be due to

The nominally Christian feast of All Souls on Nov. 2 appears to be an old Celtic festival of the dead adopted by the Church in 998 A.D.

<sup>1</sup> G. Finamore, *Credenza, Usi e Costumi Abbruzzesi* (Palermo, 1890), pp. 180-182. Mr. W. R. Paton writes to me (12th December 1906): "You do not mention the practice[s] on the modern Greek feast *τὸ ψυχῶν* (in May) which quite correspond. The *κἀλῶβα* is made in every house and put on a table laid with a white tablecloth. A glass of water and a taper are put on the table, and all is left so for the whole night. Our Greek maid servant says that when she was a child she remembers seeing the souls come

and partake. Almost the same rite is practised for the *κἀλῶβα* made on the commemoration of particular dead."

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 303, 304, 306, 307, 308.

<sup>3</sup> J. Rhys, *Celtic Heathendom*, pp. 460, 514 *sq.*; *id.*, "Celtic and Galli," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. ii, p. 8 (separate reprint).

<sup>4</sup> K. Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, iv, 379 *sq.* The first of October seems to have been a great festival among the Saxons and also the

a difference of climate, the home of the Teutons in Central and Northern Europe being a region where winter sets in earlier than on the more temperate and humid coasts of the Atlantic, the home of the Celts. These considerations suggest that the festival of All Souls on the second of November originated with the Celts, and spread from them to the rest of the European peoples, who, while they preserved their old feasts of the dead practically unchanged, may have transferred them to the second of November. This conjecture is supported by what we know of the ecclesiastical institution, or rather recognition, of the festival. For that recognition was first accorded at the end of the tenth century in France, a Celtic country, from which the Church festival gradually spread over Europe. It was Odilo, abbot of the great Benedictine monastery of Clugny, who initiated the change in 998 A.D. by ordering that in all the monasteries over which he ruled, a solemn mass should be celebrated on the second of November for all the dead who sleep in Christ. The example thus set was followed by other religious houses, and the bishops, one after another, introduced the new celebration into their dioceses. Thus the festival of All Souls gradually established itself throughout Christendom, though in fact the Church has never formally sanctioned it by a general edict nor attached much weight to its observance. Indeed, when objections were raised to the festival at the Reformation, the ecclesiastical authorities seemed ready to abandon it.<sup>1</sup> These facts are explained very simply by the theory that an old Celtic commemoration of the dead lingered in France down to the end of the tenth century, and was then, as a measure of policy and a concession to ineradicable paganism, at last

Institution  
of the  
Feast of  
All Souls  
by the  
Abbot of  
Clugny.

Samagitanus. See Widukind, *Res gestae Saxonice*, i. 12 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, cxxxvii. 135); M. A. Michov, "De Sarmatia Asiatica atque Europea," in S. Grynaeus's *Novus Orbis Regionum ac Insularum veteribus incognitarum* (Bâle, 1532), p. 520. I have to thank Mr. H. M. Chadwick for pointing out these two passages to me. Mr. A. Tille prefers to date the Teutonic winter from Martinmas, the eleventh of November. See A. Tille,

*Die Geschichte der deutschen Weihnacht*, pp. 23 sqq.; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, p. 395.

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Binterim, *Die vorzüglichsten Denkwürdigkeiten der Christ-Katholischen Kirche*, v. 1 (Mayence, 1829), pp. 493 sq.; Herzog und Plitt, *Real-Encyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*,<sup>2</sup> i. 303 sq.; W. Smith and S. Cheetham, *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, i. 57 sq.



incorporated in the Catholic ritual. The consciousness of the heathen origin of the practice would naturally prevent the supreme authorities from insisting strongly on its observance. They appear rightly to have regarded it as an outpost which they could surrender to the forces of rationalism without endangering the citadel of the faith.

Perhaps we may go a step further and explain in like manner the origin of the feast of All Saints on the first of November. For the analogy of similar customs elsewhere would lead us to suppose that the old Celtic festival of the dead was held on the Celtic New Year's Day, that is, on the first, not the second, of November. May not then the institution of the feast of All Saints on that day have been the first attempt of the Church to give a colour of Christianity to the ancient heathen rite by substituting the saints for the souls of the dead as the true object of worship? The facts of history seem to countenance this hypothesis. For the feast of All Saints was instituted in France and Germany by order of the Emperor Lewis the Pious in 835 A.D., that is, about a hundred and sixty years before the introduction of the feast of All Souls. The innovation was made by the advice of the pope, Gregory IV., whose motive may well have been that of suppressing an old pagan custom which was still notoriously practised in France and Germany. The idea, however, was not a novel one, for the testimony of Bede proves that in Britain, another Celtic country, the feast of All Saints on the first of November was already celebrated in the eighth century.<sup>1</sup> We may conjecture that this attempt to divert the devotion of the faithful from the souls of the dead to the saints proved a failure, and that finally the Church reluctantly decided to sanction the popular superstition by frankly admitting a feast of All Souls into the calendar. But it could not assign the new, or rather the old, festival to the old day, the first of

The feast of All Saints on Nov. 1 seems also to have displaced a heathen festival of the dead.

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Binterim, *op. cit.* v. 1, pp. 487 sqq.; Herzog und Plitt, *op. cit.* l. p. 303; W. Smith and S. Cheetham, *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, i. 57. In the last of these works a passage from the *Martyrologium Romanum Vetus* is quoted which

states that a feast of Saints (*Festivitas Sanctorum*) on the first of November was celebrated at Rome. But the date of this particular Martyrology is disputed. See A. J. Binterim, *op. cit.* v. 1, pp. 52-54.

Egyptians, with shorn heads, annually lamented over a buried idol of Osiris, smiting their breasts, slashing their shoulders, tearing open their old wounds, until, after several days of mourning, they professed to find the mangled remains of the god, at which they rejoiced.<sup>1</sup> However the details of the ceremony may have varied in different places, the pretence of finding the god's body, and probably of restoring it to life, was a great event in the festal year of the Egyptians. The shouts of joy which greeted it are described or alluded to by many ancient writers.<sup>2</sup>

#### § 4. *The Festival in the Month of Choiak*

The great  
Osirian in-  
scription at  
Dendera.

The funeral rites of Osiris, as they were observed at his great festival in the sixteen provinces of Egypt, are described in a long inscription of the Ptolemaic period, which is engraved on the walls of the god's temple at Dendera, the Tentyra of the Greeks, a town of Upper Egypt situated on the western bank of the Nile about forty miles north of Thebes.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, while the information thus furnished is remarkably full and minute on many points, the arrangement adopted in the inscription is so confused and the expression often so obscure that a clear and consistent account of the ceremonies as a whole can hardly be extracted from it. Moreover, we learn from the document that the ceremonies varied somewhat in the several cities, the ritual of Abydos, for example, differing from that of Busiris. Without attempting to trace all the particularities of local usage I shall briefly indicate what seem to have been the leading features of the festival, so far as these can be ascertained with tolerable certainty.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 2. Herodotus tells (ii. 61) how the Carians cut their foreheads with knives at the mourning for Osiris.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the writers who have been already cited see Juvenal, viii. 29 sq.; Athenagoras, *Supplicatio pro Christianis*, 22, pp. 112, 114, ed. J. C. T. Otto; Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, i. 13; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vi. 10.

<sup>3</sup> W. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, ii. 1127.

<sup>4</sup> For complete translations of the inscription see H. Brugsch, "Das Osiris-Mysterium von Tentyra," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1881, pp. 77-111; V. Loret, "Les fêtes d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak," *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes*, lii. (1882) pp. 43-57, iv. (1888) pp. 21-33, v. (1884) pp.



The rites lasted eighteen days, from the twelfth to the thirtieth of the month Choiak, and set forth the nature of Osiris in his triple aspect as dead, dismembered, and finally reconstituted by the union of his scattered limbs. In the first of these aspects he was called Chent-Ament, in the second Osiris-Sep, and in the third Sokari.<sup>1</sup> Small images of the god were moulded of sand or vegetable earth and corn, to which incense was sometimes added;<sup>2</sup> his face was painted yellow and his cheek-bones green.<sup>3</sup> These images were cast in a mould of pure gold, which represented the god in the form of a mummy, with the white crown of Egypt on his head.<sup>4</sup> The festival opened on the twelfth day of Choiak with a ceremony of ploughing and sowing. Two black cows were yoked to the plough, which was made of tamarisk wood, while the share was of black copper. A boy scattered the seed. One end of the field was sown with barley, the other with spelt, and the middle with flax. During the operation the chief celebrant recited the ritual chapter of "the sowing of the fields."<sup>5</sup> At Busiris on the twentieth of Choiak sand and barley were put in the god's "garden," which appears to have been a sort of large flower-pot. This was done in the presence of the cow-goddess Shenty, represented seemingly by the image of a cow made

The rites of Osiris in the month of Choiak represented the god as dead, dismembered, and then reconstituted by the union of his scattered limbs.

85-103. On the document and the festivals described in it see further A. Mariette-Pacha, *Dendrah* (Paris, 1880), pp. 334-347; J. Dümichen, "Die dem Osiris im Denderatempel geweihten Räume," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1882, pp. 88-101; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, pp. 616-618; R. V. Lanson, *Dictionnaire de Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 725-744; A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 262; *id.*, "Osiris végétant," *Le Museion*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 113; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 128 *sq.*; Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos* (London, 1904), pp. 27 *sq.*

<sup>1</sup> R. V. Lanson, *op. cit.* p. 727.

<sup>2</sup> H. Brugsch, in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1881, pp. 80-82; A. Wiedemann, in *Le Museion*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 113. The corn used in the

making of the images is called barley by Brugsch and Miss M. A. Murray (*l.c.*), but wheat (*ble*) by Mr. V. Loret.

<sup>3</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 99, 101.

<sup>4</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 82 *sq.*; R. V. Lanson, *op. cit.* p. 728; Miss Margaret A. Murray, *op. cit.* p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 90 *sq.*, 96 *sq.*, 98; R. V. Lanson, *op. cit.* pp. 743 *sq.*; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 128. According to Lanson, the ploughing took place, not on the first, but on the last day of the festival, namely, on the thirtieth of Choiak; and that certainly appears to have been the date of the ploughing at Busiris, for the inscription directs that there "the ploughing of the earth shall take place in the Serapeum of An-n-beh under the fine Persia-trees on the last day of the month Choiak" (H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 84).

of gilt sycamore wood with a headless human image in its inside. "Then fresh inundation water was poured out of a golden vase over both the goddess and the 'garden,' and the barley was allowed to grow as the emblem of the resurrection of the god after his burial in the earth, 'for the growth of the garden is the growth of the divine substance.'"<sup>1</sup> On the twenty-second of Choiak, at the eighth hour, the images of Osiris, attended by thirty-four images of deities, performed a mysterious voyage in thirty-four tiny boats made of papyrus, which were illuminated by three hundred and sixty-five lights.<sup>2</sup> On the twenty-fourth of Choiak, after sunset, the effigy of Osiris in a coffin of mulberry wood was laid in the grave, and at the ninth hour of the night the effigy which had been made and deposited the year before was removed and placed upon boughs of sycamore.<sup>3</sup> Lastly, on the thirtieth day of Choiak they repaired to the holy sepulchre, a subterranean chamber over which appears to have grown a clump of Persea-trees. Entering the vault by the western door, they laid the coffined effigy of the dead god reverently on a bed of sand in the chamber. So they left him to his rest, and departed from the sepulchre by the eastern door. Thus ended the ceremonies in the month of Choiak.<sup>4</sup>

The burial  
of Osiris.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osirian at Abydos*, p. 28; H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 83, 92. The headless human image in the cow may have stood for Isis, who is said to have been decapitated by her son Horus, and to have received from Thoth a cow's head as a substitute (Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 20; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 177; Ed. Meyer, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 366).

<sup>2</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 92 sq.; K. V. Lanzone, *op. cit.* pp. 738-740; A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 262; Miss M. A. Murray, *op. cit.* p. 35. An Egyptian calendar, written at Saïs about 300 B.C., has under the date 26 Choiak the following entry: "Osiris sails about and the golden boat is brought forth." See *The Hibeh Papyri*, part I., edited by B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt (London,

1906), pp. 146, 153. In the Canopic decree "the voyage of the sacred boat of Osiris" is said to take place on the 29th of Choiak from "the sanctuary in the Heracleum" to the Canopic sanctuary. See W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 56 (vol. i. pp. 105, 108). Hence it would seem that the date of this part of the festival varied somewhat in different places or at different times.

<sup>3</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* p. 99; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 129; compare Miss Margaret A. Murray, *op. cit.* p. 28, who refers the ceremony to the twenty-fifth of Choiak.

<sup>4</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.* pp. 94, 99; A. Mariette-Pacha, *Dendrah*, pp. 336 sq.; R. V. Lanzone, *op. cit.* p. 744. Mariette supposed that after depositing the new image in the sepulchre they carried out the old one of the preceding



§ 5. *The Resurrection of Osiris*

In the foregoing account of the festival, drawn from the great inscription of Dendera, the burial of Osiris figures prominently, while his resurrection is implied rather than expressed. This defect of the document, however, is amply compensated by a remarkable series of bas-reliefs which accompany and illustrate the inscription. These exhibit in a series of scenes the dead god lying swathed as a mummy on his bier, then gradually raising himself up higher and higher, until at last he has entirely quitted the bier and is seen erect between the guardian wings of the faithful Isis, who stands behind him, while a male figure holds up before his eyes the *crux ansata*, the Egyptian symbol of life.<sup>1</sup> The resurrection of the god could hardly be portrayed more graphically. Even more instructive, however, is another representation of the same event in a chamber dedicated to Osiris in the great temple of Isis at Philae. Here we see the dead body of Osiris with stalks of corn springing from it, while a priest waters the stalks from a pitcher which he holds in his hand. The accompanying inscription sets forth that "this is the form of him whom one may not name, Osiris of the mysteries, who springs from the returning waters."<sup>2</sup> Taken together, the picture and the words seem to leave no doubt that Osiris was here conceived and represented as a personification of the corn which springs from the fields after they have been fertilised by the inundation. This, according to the inscription, was the kernel of the mysteries, the innermost secret revealed to the initiated. So

The resurrection of Osiris represented on the monuments.

year, thus setting forth the resurrection as well as the death of the god. But this view is apparently not shared by Brugsch and Lanzone.

<sup>1</sup> A. Mariette-Bey, *Dendrah*, iv. (Paris, 1873) plates 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 88, 89, 90; R. V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 757 sq., with plates cclxviii.-ccxcii.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 131-138.

<sup>2</sup> H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, p. 621; R.

V. Lanzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, plate cclxi.; A. Wiedemann, "L'Osiris végétant," *Le Muséon*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 112. According to Prof. Wiedemann, the corn springing from the god's body is barley. Similarly in a papyrus of the Louvre (No. 3377) Osiris is represented swathed as a mummy and lying on his back, while stalks of corn sprout from his body. See R. V. Lanzone, *op. cit.* pp. 801 sq., with plate cccliii. 2; A. Wiedemann, "L'Osiris végétant," *Le Muséon*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 112.

in the rites of Demeter at Eleusis a reaped ear of corn was exhibited to the worshippers as the central mystery of their religion.<sup>1</sup> We can now fully understand why at the great festival of sowing in the month of Choiak the priests used to bury effigies of Osiris made of earth and corn. When these effigies were taken up again at the end of a year or of a shorter interval, the corn would be found to have sprouted from the body of Osiris, and this sprouting of the grain would be hailed as an omen, or rather as the cause, of the growth of the crops.<sup>2</sup> The corn-god produced the corn from himself: he gave his own body to feed the people: he died that they might live.

Corn-stuffed effigies of Osiris buried with the dead to ensure their resurrection.

And from the death and resurrection of their great god the Egyptians drew not only their support and sustenance in this life, but also their hope of a life eternal beyond the grave. This hope is indicated in the clearest manner by the very remarkable effigies of Osiris which have come to light in Egyptian cemeteries. Thus in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes there was found the tomb of a royal fan-bearer who lived about 1500 B.C. Among the rich contents of the tomb there was a bier on which rested a mattress of reeds covered with three layers of linen. On the upper side of the linen was painted a life-size figure of Osiris; and the interior of the figure, which was waterproof, contained a mixture of vegetable mould, barley, and a sticky fluid. The barley had sprouted and sent out shoots two or three inches long.<sup>3</sup> Again, in the cemetery at Cynopolis "were numerous burials of Osiris figures. These were made of grain wrapped up in cloth and roughly shaped like an Osiris, and placed inside a bricked-up recess at the side of the tomb, sometimes in small pottery coffins, sometimes in wooden coffins in the form of a hawk-mummy, sometimes without any coffins at all."<sup>4</sup> These corn-stuffed figures were bandaged like mummies with patches of gilding here and there, as if

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium hæreticorum*, v. 8, p. 162 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. A. Erman rightly assumes (*Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 213) that the images made in the month of Choiak were intended to germinate as a symbol of the divine resurrection.

<sup>3</sup> A. Wiedemann, "L'Osiris végétant," *Le Muséon*, N.S. iv. (1903) p. 111; *Egyptian Exploration Fund Archaeological Report*, 1898-1899, pp. 24-29.

<sup>4</sup> B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, in *Egyptian Exploration Fund Archaeological Report*, 1902-1903, p. 5.



in imitation of the golden mould in which the similar figures of Osiris were cast at the festival of sowing.<sup>1</sup> Again, effigies of Osiris, with faces of green wax and their interior full of grain, were found buried near the necropolis of Thebes.<sup>2</sup> Finally, we are told by Professor Erman that between the legs of mummies "there sometimes lies a figure of Osiris made of slime; it is filled with grains of corn, the sprouting of which is intended to signify the resurrection of the god."<sup>3</sup> We cannot doubt that, just as the burial of corn-stuffed images of Osiris in the earth at the festival of sowing was designed to quicken the seed, so the burial of similar images in the grave was meant to quicken the dead, in other words, to ensure their spiritual immortality.

### § 6. *Readjustment of Egyptian Festivals*

The festival of Osiris which Plutarch assigns to the month of Athyr would seem to be identical in substance with the one which the inscription of Dendera assigns to the following month, namely, to Choiak. Apparently the essence of both festivals was a dramatic representation of the death and resurrection of the god; in both of them Isis was figured by a gilt cow, and Osiris by an image moulded of moist vegetable earth. But if the festivals were the same, why were they held in different months? It is easy to suggest that different towns in Egypt celebrated the festival at different dates. But when we remember that according to the great inscription of Dendera, the authority of which is indisputable, the festival fell in the month of Choiak in every province of Egypt, we shall be reluctant to suppose that at some one place, or even at a few places, it was exceptionally held in the preceding month of Athyr, and that the usually well-informed Plutarch described the exception as if it had been the rule, of which on this

The festivals of Osiris in the months of Athyr and Choiak seem to have been substantially the same.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos*, pp. 28 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Sir J. Gardiner Wilkinson, *A Second Series of the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1841), ii. 300, note §. The writer seems to have doubted whether these effigies represented Osiris. But

the doubt has been entirely removed by subsequent discoveries. Wilkinson's note on the subject is omitted by his editor, S. Birch (vol. iii. p. 375, ed. 1878).

<sup>3</sup> A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 188.

supposition he must have been wholly ignorant. More probably the discrepancy is to be explained by the great change which came over the Egyptian calendar between the date of the inscription and the lifetime of Plutarch. For when the inscription was drawn up in the Ptolemaic age, the festivals were dated by the old vague or movable year, and therefore rotated gradually through the whole circle of the seasons; whereas at the time when Plutarch wrote, about the end of the first century, they were seemingly dated by the fixed Alexandrian year, and accordingly had ceased to rotate.<sup>1</sup>

The old festival Choiak may have been transferred to Athyr when the Egyptians adopted the fixed Alexandrian year in 30 B. C.

But even if we grant that in Plutarch's day the festivals had become stationary, still this would not explain why the old festival of Choiak had been transferred to Athyr. In order to understand that transference it seems necessary to suppose that when the Egyptians gave to their months fixed places in the solar year by accepting the Alexandrian system of intercalation, they at the same time transferred the festivals from what may be called their artificial to their natural dates. Under the old system a summer festival was sometimes held in winter and a winter festival in summer; a harvest celebration sometimes fell at the season of sowing, and a sowing celebration at the season of harvest. People might reconcile themselves to such anomalies so long as they knew that they were only temporary, and that in the course of time the festivals would necessarily return to their proper seasons. But it must have been otherwise when they adopted a fixed instead of a movable year, and so arrested the rotation of the festivals for ever. For they could not but be aware that every festival would thenceforth continue to occupy for all time that particular place in the solar year which it chanced to occupy in the year 30 B. C., when the calendar became fixed. If in that particular year it happened, as it might have happened, that the summer festivals were held in winter and the winter festivals in summer, they would always be so held in future; the absurdity and anomaly would never again be rectified as it had been before. This consideration, which could not have escaped intelligent men, must have suggested the advisability

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 278, 281 *sq.*, 299 *sq.*



of transferring the festivals from the dates at which they chanced to be celebrated in 30 B.C. to the dates at which they ought properly to be celebrated in the course of nature.

Now what in the year 30 B.C. was the actual amount of discrepancy between the accidental and the natural dates of the festivals? It was a little more than a month. In that year Thoth, the first month of the Egyptian calendar, happened to begin on the twenty-ninth of August,<sup>1</sup> whereas according to theory it should have begun with the heliacal rising of Sirius on the twentieth of July, that is, forty days or, roughly speaking, a month earlier. From this it follows that in the year 30 B.C. all the Egyptian festivals fell about a month later than their natural dates, and they must have continued to fall a month late for ever if they were allowed to retain those places in the calendar which they chanced to occupy in that particular year. In these circumstances it would be a natural and sensible thing to restore the festivals to their proper places in the solar year by celebrating them one calendar month earlier than before.<sup>2</sup> If this measure were adopted the festivals which had hitherto been held, for example, in the third month Athyr would henceforth be held in the second month Phaophi; the festivals which had hitherto fallen in

The transference would be intelligible if we suppose that in 30 B.C. the dates of all the Egyptian festivals were shifted by about a month in order to restore them to their natural places in the calendar.

<sup>1</sup> So it was reckoned at the time. But, strictly speaking, Thoth in that year began on August 31. The miscalculation originated in a blunder of the ignorant Roman pontiffs who, being charged with the management of the new Julian calendar, at first intercalated a day every third, instead of every fourth, year. See Solinus, i. 45-47; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 14. 13 sq.; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, i. 157-161.

<sup>2</sup> Theoretically the shift should have been 40, or rather 42 days, that being the interval between July 20 and August 29 or 31 (see the preceding note). If that shift was actually made, the calendar date of any festival in the old vague Egyptian year could be found by adding 40 or 42 days to its date in the Alexandrian year. Thus if the death of

Osiris fell on the 17th of Athyr in the Alexandrian year, it should have fallen on the 27th or 29th of Choiak in the old vague year; and if his resurrection fell on the 19th of Athyr in the Alexandrian year, it should have fallen on the 29th of Choiak or the 1st of Tybi in the old vague year. These calculations agree nearly, but not exactly, with the somewhat uncertain indications of the Dendera calendar (above, p. 322), and also with the independent evidence which we possess that the resurrection of Osiris was celebrated on the 30th of Choiak (below, pp. 340 sq.). These approximate agreements to some extent confirm my theory that, with the adoption of the fixed Alexandrian year, the dates of the official Egyptian festivals were shifted from their accidental places in the calendar to their proper places in the natural year.

the fourth month Choiak would thenceforth fall in the third month Athyr; and so on. Thus the festal calendar would be reduced to harmony with the seasons instead of being in more or less flagrant discord with them, as it had generally been before, and must always have been afterwards if the change which I have indicated had not been introduced. It is only to credit the native astronomers and the Roman rulers of Egypt with common sense to suppose that they actually adopted the measure. On that supposition we can perfectly understand why the festival of sowing, which had formerly belonged to the month of Choiak, was transferred to Athyr. For in the Alexandrian calendar Choiak corresponds very nearly to December, and Athyr to November. But in Egypt the month of November, not the month of December, is the season of sowing. There was therefore every reason why the great sowing festival of the corn-god Osiris should be held in Athyr and not Choiak, in November and not in December. In like manner we may suppose that all the Egyptian festivals were restored to their true places in the solar year, and that when Plutarch dates a festival both by its calendar month and by its relation to the cycle of the seasons, he is perfectly right in doing so, and we may accept his evidence with confidence instead of having to accuse him of ignorantly confounding the movable Egyptian with the fixed Alexandrian year. Accusations of ignorance levelled at the best writers of antiquity are apt to recoil on those who make them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If the results of the foregoing inquiry be accepted, the resurrection of Osiris was regularly celebrated in Egypt on the 15th of November from the year 30 B.C. onward, since the 15th of November corresponded to the 19th of Athyr (the resurrection day) in the fixed Alexandrian year. This agrees with the indications of the Roman Rustic Calendars, which place the resurrection (*heuresis*, that is, the discovery of Osiris) between the 14th and the 30th of November. Yet according to the calendar of Philocalus, the official Roman celebration of the resurrection seems to have been held on the 1st of November, not on the 15th. How is the discrepancy to be explained?

Th. Mommsen supposed that the festival was officially adopted at Rome at a time when the 19th of Athyr of the vague Egyptian year corresponded to the 31st of October or the 1st of November of the Julian calendar, and that the Romans, overlooking the vague or shifting character of the Egyptian year, fixed the resurrection of Osiris permanently on the 1st of November. Now the 19th of Athyr of the vague year corresponded to the 1st of November in the years 32-35 A.D. and to the 31st of October in the years 36-39; and it appears that the festival was officially adopted at Rome some time before 65 A.D. (Lucan, *Pharsalia*, viii. 831 *sqq.*). It is unlikely that the



adoption took place in the reign of Tiberius, who died in 37 A.D. ; for he is known to have persecuted the Egyptian religion (Tacitus, *Annals*, ii. 85 ; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 36 ; Josephus, *Antiquit. Jud.* xviii. 3. 4) ; hence Mommsen concluded that the great festival of Osiris was officially adopted at Rome in the early years of the reign of Caligula, that is, in 37, 38, or 39 A.D. See Th. Mommsen in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, i.<sup>2</sup> 333 sq. ; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*,

ii. 995, No. 8745. This theory of Mommsen's assumes that in Egypt the festivals were still regulated by the old vague year in the first century of our era. It cannot, therefore, be reconciled with the conclusion reached in the text that the Egyptian festivals ceased to be regulated by the old vague year from 30 B.C. onward. How the difference of date between the official Roman and the Egyptian festival of the resurrection is to be explained, I do not pretend to say.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NATURE OF OSIRIS

#### § 1. *Osiris a Corn-God*

Osiris in  
the main a  
personi-  
fication of  
the corn.

THE foregoing survey of the myth and ritual of Osiris suggests that originally he was in the main a personification of the corn, which may be said to die and come to life again every year. Through all the pomp and glamour with which in later times the priests had invested his worship, the primitive conception of him as the corn-god comes clearly out in the festival of his death and resurrection, which was celebrated in the month of Choiak and at a later period in the month of Athyr. That festival appears to have been essentially a festival of sowing, which properly fell at the time when the husbandman actually committed the seed to the earth. On that occasion an effigy of the corn-god, moulded of earth and corn, was buried with funeral rites in the ground in order that, dying there, he might come to life again with the new crops. The ceremony was, in fact, a charm to ensure the growth of the corn by sympathetic magic, and we may conjecture that as such it was practised in a simple form by every Egyptian farmer on his fields long before it was adopted and transfigured by the priests in the stately ritual of the temple. In the modern, but doubtless ancient, Arab custom of burying "the Old Man," namely, a sheaf of wheat, in the harvest-field and praying that he may return from the dead,<sup>1</sup> we see the germ out of which the whole worship of Osiris was probably developed.

The details of his myth fit in well with this interpreta-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 298.



tion of the god. He was said to be the offspring of Sky and Earth.<sup>1</sup> What more appropriate parentage could be invented for the corn which springs from the ground that has been fertilised by the water of heaven? It is true that the land of Egypt owed its fertility directly to the Nile and not to showers; but the inhabitants must have been aware that the great river in its turn was fed by the rains which fell on the mountains of Abyssinia. Again, the legend that Osiris was the first to teach men the use of corn<sup>2</sup> would be most naturally told of the corn-god himself. Further, the story that his mangled remains were scattered up and down the land and buried in different places may be a mythical way of expressing either the sowing or the winnowing of the grain. The latter interpretation is supported by the tale that Isis placed the severed limbs of Osiris on a corn-sieve.<sup>3</sup> Or more probably the legend may be a reminiscence of a custom of slaying a human representative of the corn-spirit and distributing his flesh or scattering his ashes over the fields to fertilise them. In modern Europe the figure of Death is sometimes torn in pieces, and the fragments are then buried in the ground to make the crops grow well,<sup>4</sup> and in other parts of the world human victims are treated in the same way.<sup>5</sup> With regard to the ancient Egyptians we have it on the authority of Manetho that they used to burn red-haired men and scatter their ashes with winnowing fans,<sup>6</sup> and it is highly significant that this barbarous sacrifice was offered by the kings at the grave of Osiris.<sup>7</sup> We may conjecture that the victims represented Osiris himself, who was annually slain, dismembered, and buried in their persons that he might quicken the seed in the earth.

Osiris a child of Sky and Earth.

The legend of the dismemberment of Osiris points to the dismemberment of human beings, perhaps of the kings, in the character of the corn-spirit.

Possibly in prehistoric times the kings themselves

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 269 sq.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 270 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 166.

<sup>4</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 95.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* ii. 238 sqq.

<sup>6</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 73, compare 33.

<sup>7</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 88. 5. The slaughter may have been performed by the king with his own hand. On Egyptian monuments the king is often

represented in the act of slaying prisoners before a god. See A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, pp. 179, 224. Similarly the kings of Ashantee and Dahomey used often themselves to cut the throats of the human victims. See A. H. Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, p. 162; *id.*, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast*, pp. 125, 129.

Roman  
and Greek  
traditions  
of the dismem-  
berment  
of kings.

played the part of the god and were slain and dismembered in that character. Set as well as Osiris is said to have been torn in pieces after a reign of eighteen days, which was commemorated by an annual festival of the same length.<sup>1</sup> According to one story Romulus, the first king of Rome, was cut in pieces by the senators, who buried the fragments of him in the ground;<sup>2</sup> and the traditional day of his death, the seventh of July, was celebrated with certain curious rites, which were apparently connected with the artificial fertilisation of the fig.<sup>3</sup> Again, Greek legend told how Pentheus, king of Thebes, and Lycurgus, king of the Thracian Edonians, opposed the vine-god Dionysus, and how the impious monarchs were rent in pieces, the one by the frenzied Bacchanals, the other by horses.<sup>4</sup> These Greek traditions may well be distorted reminiscences of a custom of sacrificing human beings, and especially divine kings, in the character of Dionysus, a god who resembled Osiris in many points and was said like him to have been torn limb from limb.<sup>5</sup> We are told that in Chios men were rent in pieces

<sup>1</sup> *Scholia in Caesaris Germanici Aratea*, in F. Eyssenhardt's edition of Martianus Capella, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> Dionysius Halicarnasensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* ii. 56. 4. Compare Livy, i. 16. 4; Florus, i. 1. 16 sq.; Plutarch, *Romulus*, 27. Mr. A. B. Cook was, I believe, the first to interpret the story as a reminiscence of the sacrifice of a king. See his article "The European Sky-God," *Folk-lore*, xvi. (1905) pp. 324 sq. However, the acute historian A. Schweigler long ago maintained that the tradition rested on some very ancient religious rite, which was afterwards abolished or misunderstood, and he rightly compared the legendary deaths of Pentheus and Orpheus (*Römische Geschichte*, i. 534 sq.). See further W. Otto, "Juno," *Philologus*, lxi. (1905) pp. 187 sq.

<sup>3</sup> See my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 269 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Euripides, *Bacchae*, 43 sqq., 1043 sqq.; Theocritus, xxvi.; Pausanias, ii. 2. 7; Apollodorus, iii. 5. 1 sq.; Hyginus, *Fab.* 132 and 184. The

destruction of Lycurgus by horses seems to be mentioned only by Apollodorus. As to Pentheus see especially A. G. Bather, "The Problem of the Bacchae," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xiv. (1904) pp. 244-263.

<sup>5</sup> Nonnus, *Dionys.* vi. 165-205; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 17 sq., p. 15 ed. Potter; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 6; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 19. According to the Clementine *Recognitiones*, x. 24 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, i. 1434) Dionysus was torn in pieces at Thebes, the very place of which Pentheus was king. The description of Euripides (*Bacchae*, 1058 sqq.) suggests that the human victim was tied or hung to a pine-tree before being rent to pieces. We are reminded of the effigy of Attis which hung on the sacred pine (above, p. 222), and of the image of Osiris which was made out of a pine-tree and then buried in the hollow of the trunk (below, p. 340). The pine-tree on which Pentheus was



as a sacrifice to Dionysus;<sup>1</sup> and since they died the same death as their god, it is reasonable to suppose that they personated him. The story that the Thracian Orpheus was similarly torn limb from limb by the Bacchanals seems to indicate that he too perished in the character of the god whose death he died.<sup>2</sup> It is significant that the Thracian Lycurgus, king of the Edonians, is said to have been put to death in order that the ground, which had ceased to be fruitful, might regain its fertility.<sup>3</sup> In some Thracian villages at Carnival time a custom is still annually observed, which may well be a mitigation of an ancient practice of putting a man, perhaps a king, to death in the character of Dionysus for the sake of the crops. A man disguised in goatskins and fawnskins, the livery of Dionysus, is shot at and falls down as dead. A pretence is made of flaying his body and of mourning over him, but afterwards he comes to life again. Further, a plough is dragged about the village and seed is scattered, while prayers are said that the wheat, rye, and barley may be plentiful. One town (Viza), where these customs are observed, was the capital of the old Thracian kings. In another town (Kosti, near the Black Sea), the principal masker is called the king. He wears goatskins or sheepskins, and is attended by a boy who dispenses wine to the people. The king himself carries seed, which he casts on the ground before the church, after being invited to throw it on two

Modern Thracian pretence of killing a man, who is sometimes called a king, for the good of the crops.

pelted by the Bacchanals before they tore him limb from limb is said to have been worshipped as if it were the god himself by the Corinthians, who made two images of Dionysus out of it (Pausanias, ii. 2. 7). The tradition points to an intimate connection between the tree, the god, and the human victim.

<sup>1</sup> Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, ii. 55. At Potniae in Boeotia a priest of Dionysus is said to have been killed by the drunken worshippers (Pausanias, ix. 8. 2). He may have been sacrificed in the character of the god.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *De saltatione*, 51; Plato, *Symposium*, 7, p. 179 D, E; Pausanias, ix. 30. 5; Ovid, *Metam.* xl. 1-43; O. Gruppe, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon*

*d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, iii. 1165 sq. That Orpheus died the death of the god has been observed both in ancient and modern times. See E. Rohde, *Psyche*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 118, note 2, quoting Proclus on Plato; S. Reinach, "La mort d'Orphée," *Cultes Mythes et Religions*, ii. (1906) pp. 85-199. According to Ovid, the Bacchanals killed him with hoes, rakes, and mattocks. Similarly in West Africa human victims used to be killed with spades and hoes and then buried in a field which had just been tilled (Labat, *Relation historique de l'Ethiopie occidentale*, i. 380). Such a mode of sacrifice points to the identification of the human victim with the fruits of the earth.

<sup>3</sup> Apollodorus, iii. 5. 1.

bands of married and unmarried men respectively. Finally, he is stripped of the skins and thrown into the river.<sup>1</sup>

Norwegian  
tradition  
of the  
dismem-  
berment  
of a king,  
Halfdan  
the Black.

Further, we read of a Norwegian king, Halfdan the Black, whose body was cut up and buried in different parts of his kingdom for the sake of ensuring the fruitfulness of the earth. He is said to have been drowned at the age of forty through the breaking of the ice in spring. What followed his death is thus related by the old Norse historian Snorri Sturluson: "He had been the most prosperous (literally, blessed with abundance) of all kings. So greatly did men value him that when the news came that he was dead and his body removed to Hringariki and intended for burial there, the chief men from Raumariki and Westfold and Heithmörk came and all requested that they might take his body with them and bury it in their various provinces; they thought that it would bring abundance to those who obtained it. Eventually it was settled that the body was distributed in four places. The head was laid in a barrow at Steinn in Hringariki, and each party took away their own share and buried it. All these barrows are called Halfdan's barrows."<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that this Halfdan belonged to the family of the Ynglings, who traced their descent from Frey, the great Scandinavian god of fertility.<sup>3</sup> Frey himself is said to have reigned as king of Sweden at Upsala. The years of his reign were plenteous, and the people laid the plenty to his account. So when he died, they would not burn him, as it had been customary to

Frey, the  
Scandi-  
navian god  
of fertility,  
buried at  
Upsala.

<sup>1</sup> R. M. Dawkins, "The Modern Carnival in Thrace and the Cult of Dionysus," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxvi. (1906) pp. 191-206.

<sup>2</sup> Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla, Saga Halfdanar Svarta*, ch. 9. I have to thank Mr. H. M. Chadwick for referring me to this passage and translating it for me. See also *Heimskringla*, done into English by W. Morris and E. Magnússon, i. 86 sq. (*The Saga Library*, vol. iii.). Halfdan the Black was the father of Harold the Fair-haired, king of Norway (860-933 A.D.). Mr. Chadwick tells me that, though the tradition as to the death and mutilation of Halfdan was not committed to writing for three

hundred years, he sees no reason to doubt its truth. He also informs me that the word translated "abundance" means literally "the produce of the season." "Plenteous years" is the rendering of Morris and Magnússon.

<sup>3</sup> As to the descent of Halfdan and the Ynglings from Frey, see *Heimskringla*, done into English by W. Morris and E. Magnússon, i. 23-71 (*The Saga Library*, vol. iii.). With regard to Frey, the god of fertility, both animal and vegetable, see E. H. Meyer, *Mythologie der Germanen* (Strasburg, 1903), pp. 366 sq.; P. Hermann, *Nordische Mythologie* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 206 sqq.



do with the dead before his time; but they resolved to preserve his body, believing that, so long as it remained in Sweden, the land would have abundance and peace. Therefore they reared a great mound, and put him in it, and sacrificed to him for plenty and peace ever afterwards. And for three years after his death they poured the tribute to him into the mound, as if he were alive; the gold they poured in by one window, the silver by a second, and the copper by a third.<sup>1</sup>

Taken all together, these Egyptian, Roman, Greek, and Norse legends point to a widespread practice of dismembering the body of a king and burying the pieces in different parts of the kingdom in order to ensure the fertility of the ground and probably also the fecundity of man and beast. Whether regarded as the descendant of a god, as himself divine, or simply as a mighty enchanter, the king was believed to radiate magical virtue for the good of his subjects, quickening the seed in the earth and in the womb. This radiation of reproductive energy did not cease with his life; hence the people deemed it essential to preserve his body as a pledge of the continued prosperity of the country. It would be natural to imagine that the spot where the dead king was buried would enjoy a more than ordinary share of his blessed influence, and accordingly disputes would almost inevitably arise between different districts for the exclusive possession of so powerful a talisman. These disputes could be settled and local jealousies appeased by dividing the precious body between the rival claimants, in order that all should benefit in equal measure by its life-giving properties. This was certainly done in Norway with the body of Halfdan the Black, the descendant of the harvest-god Frey; and we may conjecture that in prehistoric times it was done with the bodies of Egyptian kings, who personated Osiris, the god of fertility in general and of the corn in particular. At least such a practice would account for the legend of the mangling of the god's body and the distribution of the pieces throughout Egypt.

In this connection the story that the genital member

Apparently  
widespread  
custom  
of dis-  
membering  
a king and  
burying the  
pieces in  
different  
parts of the  
kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> *Heimskringla*, done into English by W. Morris and E. Magnússon, i. 4, 22-24 (*The Saga Library*, vol. iii.).

In this dismemberment a special virtue seems to have been ascribed to the genital organs.

of Osiris was missing when Isis pieced together his mutilated body,<sup>1</sup> may not be without significance. When a Zulu medicine-man wishes to make the crops grow well, he will take the body of a man who has died in full vigour and cut minute portions of tissue from the foot, the leg, the arm, the face, and the nail of a single finger in order to compound a fertilising medicine out of them. But the most important part of the medicine consists of the dead man's generative organs, which are removed entire. All these pieces of the corpse are fried with herbs on a slow fire, then ground to powder, and sown over the fields.<sup>2</sup> We have seen that similarly the Egyptians scattered the ashes of human victims by means of winnowing-fans;<sup>3</sup> and if my explanation of the practice is correct, it may well have been that they, like the Zulus, attributed a special power of reproduction to the genital organs, and therefore carefully excised them from the body of the victim in order to impart their virtue to the fields. I have conjectured that a similar use was made of the severed portions of the priests of Attis.<sup>4</sup>

The Egyptian kings probably opposed the custom and succeeded in abolishing it.

Precautions taken to preserve the bodies of kings from mutilation.

To an ancient Egyptian, with his firm belief in a personal immortality dependent on the integrity of the body, the prospect of mutilation after death must have been very repugnant; and we may suppose that the kings offered a strenuous resistance to the custom and finally succeeded in abolishing it. They may have represented to the people that they would attain their object better by keeping the royal corpse intact than by frittering it away in small pieces. Their subjects apparently acquiesced in the argument, or at all events in the conclusion; yet the mountains of masonry beneath which the old Egyptian kings lay buried may have been intended to guard them from the superstitious devotion of their friends quite as much as from the hostile designs of their enemies, since both alike must have been under a strong temptation to violate the sanctity of the grave in order to possess themselves of bodies which were believed to be endowed with magical virtue of the most tremendous

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Dudley Kidd, *Savage Childhood* (London, 1906), p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> Above, p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> Above, pp. 223 *sq.*



potency. In antiquity the safety of the state was often believed to depend on the possession of a talisman, which sometimes consisted of the bones of a king or hero. Hence the graves of such persons were sometimes kept secret.<sup>1</sup> The violation of royal tombs by a conqueror was not a mere insult: it was a deadly blow struck at the prosperity of the kingdom. Hence Ashurbanipal carried off to Assyria the bones of the kings of Elam, believing that thus he gave their shades no repose and deprived them of food and drink.<sup>2</sup> The Moabites burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime.<sup>3</sup> Lysimachus is said to have opened the graves of the kings of Epirus and scattered the bones of the dead.<sup>4</sup> The Mpongwe kings of West Africa are buried secretly lest their heads should fall into the hands of men of another tribe, who would make a powerful fetish out of the brains.<sup>5</sup> In Togoland, West Africa, the kings of the Ho tribe are buried with great secrecy in the forest, and a false grave is made ostentatiously in the king's house. None but his personal retainers and a single daughter know where the king's real grave is. The intention of this secret burial is to prevent enemies from digging up the corpse and cutting off the head.<sup>6</sup> The graves of Basuto chiefs are kept secret lest certain more or less imaginary witches and wizards called *Baloi*, who haunt tombs, should get possession of the bones and work evil magic with them.<sup>7</sup> When a Melanesian dies who enjoyed a reputation for magical powers in his lifetime, his friends will sometimes hold a sham burial and keep the real grave secret for fear that men might come and dig up the skull and bones to make charms with them.<sup>8</sup>

Graves of  
kings kept  
secret.

<sup>1</sup> See my notes on Pausanias, i. 28. 7 and viii. 47. 5 (vol. ii. pp. 366 sq., vol. iv. pp. 433 sq.).

<sup>2</sup> R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> Amos, ii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Pausanias, i. 9. 7 sq.

<sup>5</sup> P. B. du Chaillu, *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa*, pp. 18 sq.

<sup>6</sup> J. Spieth, *Die Eke-Stämme* (Berlin, 1906), p. 107.

<sup>7</sup> Father Porte, "Les reminiscences d'un missionnaire du Basutoland," *Missions Catholiques*, xxviii. (1896) pp. 311 sq. As to the *Baloi*, see A. Merensky, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss Süd-Afrikas* (Berlin, 1875), pp. 138 sq.; E. Gottschling, "The Bawenda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) p. 375. For these two references I have to thank Mr. E. S. Hartland.

<sup>8</sup> R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 269.

Among the Koniags of Alaska the bodies of dead whalers were cut up and used as talismans.

Beliefs and practices of this sort are by no means confined to agricultural peoples. Among the Koniags of Alaska "in ancient times the pursuit of the whale was accompanied by numerous superstitious observances kept a secret by the hunters. Lieutenant Davidof states that the whalers preserved the bodies of brave or distinguished men in secluded caves, and before proceeding upon a whale-hunt would carry these dead bodies into a stream and then drink of the water thus tainted. One famous whaler of Kadiak who desired to flatter Baranof, the first chief manager of the Russian colonies, said to him, 'When you die I shall try to steal your body,' intending thus to express his great respect for Baranof. On the occasion of the death of a whaler his fellows would cut the body into pieces, each man taking one of them for the purpose of rubbing his spear-heads therewith. These pieces were dried or otherwise preserved, and were frequently taken into the canoes as talismans."<sup>1</sup>

Assimilation of human victims to the corn.

To return to the human victims whose ashes the Egyptians scattered with winnowing-fans,<sup>2</sup> the red hair of these unfortunates was probably significant. If I am right, the custom of sacrificing such persons was not a mere way of wreaking a national spite on fair-haired foreigners, whom the black-haired Egyptians of old, like the black-haired Chinese of modern times, may have regarded as red-haired devils. For in Egypt the oxen which were sacrificed had also to be red; a single black or white hair found on the beast would have disqualified it for the sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> If, as I conjecture, these human sacrifices were intended to promote the growth of the crops—and the winnowing of their ashes seems to support this view—red-haired victims were perhaps selected as best fitted to personate the spirit of the ruddy grain. For when a god is represented by a living person, it is natural that the human representative should be chosen on the ground of his supposed resemblance to the divine original.

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Petroff, *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska*, p. 142. The account seems to be borrowed from H. J. Holmberg, who adds that pains were taken to preserve the flesh from decay, "because they believed that their own life depended

on it." See H. J. Holmberg, "Ueber die Völker des Russischen Amerika," *Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae*, iv. (Helsingfors, 1856) p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 331.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 31; Herodotus, ii. 38.



Hence the ancient Mexicans, conceiving the maize as a personal being who went through the whole course of life between seed-time and harvest, sacrificed new-born babes when the maize was sown, older children when it had sprouted, and so on till it was fully ripe, when they sacrificed old men.<sup>1</sup> A name for Osiris was the "crop" or "harvest";<sup>2</sup> and the ancients sometimes explained him as a personification of the corn.<sup>3</sup>

## § 2. *Osiris a Tree-Spirit*

But Osiris was more than a spirit of the corn; he was also a tree-spirit, and this may perhaps have been his primitive character, since the worship of trees is naturally older in the history of religion than the worship of the cereals. However that may have been, to an agricultural people like the Egyptians, who depended almost wholly on their crops, the corn-god was naturally a far more important personage than the tree-god, and attracted a larger share of their devotion. The character of Osiris as a tree-spirit was represented very graphically in a ceremony described by

Osiris as a tree-spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Herrera, quoted by A. Bastian, *Die Culturländer des alten Amerika*, ii. 639; id., *General History of the vast Continent and Islands of America*, ii. 379 sq., translated by Stevens (whose version of the passage is inadequate). Compare Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale*, i. 327, iii. 535.

<sup>2</sup> E. Lesbux, *Le mythe Osirien* (Paris, 1874-75), p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 2, "Defensores eorum volunt addere physicam rationem, frugum semina Osirim dicentes esse; Isim terram, Tyfonem calorem: et quia maturitas fruges calore ad vitam hominum colliguntur et divina a terra separantur et rursus adpropinquante hieme seminantur, hanc volunt esse mortem Osiridis, cum fruges reconducunt, inventionem vero, cum fruges genitali terrae semento conceptas annua rursus coeperint procreatione generari." Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, i. 13, "Sic et Osiris quod

*semper sepelitur et in vivo quæritur et cum gaudio invenitur, recipere frugum et vividorum elementorum et recidivi anni fidem argumentantur.*" Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 65, οὕτω δὲ καὶ τοῖς πολλοῖς καὶ φορτικοῖς ἐπιχειροῦμεν, εἶτε ταῖς καθ' ὥραν μεταβολαῖς τοῦ περικύχοντος εἶτε ταῖς καρπῶν γενέσεσι καὶ σποραῖς καὶ ἀρότοις χαίρουσι τὰ περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦτοι συνακαιοῦντες, καὶ λέγοντες θάπτεσθαι μὲν Ὀσίριν ὅτε ἀρόπτεται τῇ γῇ σπυρίμενος ὁ καρπός, αἰθεὶς δ' ἀναβιβέσθαι καὶ ἀναφαίνεσθαι ὅτε βλαστήσει ἀρχῇ. Eusebius, *Præparatio Evangelii*, iii. 11. 31, ὁ δὲ Ὀσίρις παρ' Αἰγυπτίων τὴν ἀρπύριον παρίστησι δόναμον, ἣν θῆρου ἀπομειλίσσονται εἰς γῆν ἀφανίζομένην ἐν τῷ σπέρμῳ καὶ ὅψ' ἡμῶν καταναλισκομένην εἰς τὰς τροφάς. Athenagoras, *Supplicatio pro Christianis*, 22, pp. 112, 114 ed. J. C. T. Otto, τὰ δὲ στοιχεία καὶ τὰ μέρη αὐτῶν θεοποιούσιν, ἄλλοτε ἄλλα ὀνόματα αὐτοῖς τιθέμενοι, τὴν μὲν τοῦ αἵτου σποράς Ὀσίριν (ὅθεν φασὶ μυστικῶς ἐκὶ τῇ ἀνεύρεσι τῶν μελῶν ἢ τῶν καρπῶν ἐπιλεχθῆναι τῇ Ἰσιδι· Εὐρήκαμεν, συγχάρομεν).

His image  
enclosed in  
a pine-tree.

Firmicus Maternus.<sup>1</sup> A pine-tree having been cut down, the centre was hollowed out, and with the wood thus excavated an image of Osiris was made, which was then buried like a corpse in the hollow of the tree. It is hard to imagine how the conception of a tree as tenanted by a personal being could be more plainly expressed. The image of Osiris thus made was kept for a year and then burned, exactly as was done with the image of Attis which was attached to the pine-tree.<sup>2</sup> The ceremony of cutting the tree, as described by Firmicus Maternus, appears to be alluded to by Plutarch.<sup>3</sup> It was probably the ritual counterpart of the mythical discovery of the body of Osiris enclosed in the *erica*-tree.<sup>4</sup>

The setting  
up of the  
*dad* pillar  
at the great  
festival of  
Osiris in  
the month  
of Choiak.

Now we know from the monuments that at Busiris, Memphis, and elsewhere the great festival of Osiris closed on the thirtieth of Choiak with the setting up of a remarkable pillar known as the *tatu*, *tat*, *dad*, or *ded*. This was a column with four or five cross-bars, like superposed capitals, at the top. The whole roughly resembled a telegraph-post with the cross-pieces which support the wires. Sometimes on the monuments a human form is given to the pillar by carving a grotesque face on it, robing the lower part, crowning the top with the symbols of Osiris, and adding two arms which hold two other characteristic emblems of the god, the crook and the scourge or flail. On a Theban tomb the king himself, assisted by his relations and a priest, is represented hauling at the ropes by which the pillar is being raised, while the queen looks on and her sixteen daughters accompany the ceremony with the music of rattles and sistrums. Again, in the hall of the Osirian mysteries at Abydos the King Sety I. and the goddess Isis are depicted raising the column between them. In Egyptian theology the pillar was interpreted as the backbone of Osiris, and whatever its meaning may have been, it was one of the holiest symbols of the national religion. It might very well be a conventional way of representing a tree stripped of its leaves; and if Osiris was

<sup>1</sup> *De errore profanarum religionum*, 27.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 222, 231.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 21, αλω δὲ τομὴν ξύλου καὶ σχίσιν ἄλυν καὶ χοάς

χομέρας, διὰ τὸ πολλὰ τῶν μυστικῶν ἀναμελῆσθαι τοῖς τοῖς. Again, *ibid.* 42, τὸ δὲ ξύλον ἐν ταῖς λεγομέναις Ὀσιρίδος ταφαῖς τέμνονται κατασκευάζουσι λάβρακα μνησιδῆ.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 272.



a tree-spirit, the bare trunk and branches might naturally be described as his backbone. The setting up of the column would thus, as several modern scholars believe, shadow forth the resurrection of the god, and the importance of the occasion would explain and justify the prominent part which the king appears to have taken in the ceremony.<sup>1</sup> It is to be noted that in the myth of Osiris the *erica*-tree which shot up and enclosed his dead body, was cut down by a king and turned by him into a pillar of his house.<sup>2</sup> We can hardly doubt, therefore, that this incident of the legend was supposed to be dramatically set forth in the erection of the *dad* column by the king. Like the similar custom of cutting a pine-tree and fastening an image to it in the rites of Attis, the ceremony may have belonged to that class of customs of which the bringing in of the May-pole is among the most familiar. The association of the king and queen of Egypt with the *dad* pillar reminds us of the association of a King and Queen of May with the May-pole.<sup>3</sup> The resemblance may be more than superficial.

The setting up of the pillar may have been an emblem of the god's resurrection.

In the hall of Osiris at Dendera the coffin containing the hawk-headed mummy of the god is clearly depicted as enclosed within a tree, apparently a conifer, the trunk and branches of which are seen above and below the coffin.<sup>4</sup> The scene thus corresponds closely both to the myth and to the ceremony described by Firmicus Maternus. In another scene at Dendera a tree of the same sort is represented growing between the dead and the reviving Osiris, as if on purpose to indicate that the tree was the symbol of the divine resurrection.<sup>5</sup> A pine-cone often appears on the

Osiris associated with the pine, the sycamore, the tamarisk, and the acacia.

<sup>1</sup> As to the *tat* or *dad* pillar and its erection at the festival see H. Brugsch in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Alterthumskunde*, 1881, pp. 84, 96; *id.*, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, p. 618; A. Erman, *Aegypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 377 sq.; *id.*, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 17; C. P. Tiele, *History of the Egyptian Religion*, pp. 46 sq.; Sir J. Gardiner Wilkin-son, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. pp. 67, note 3, and 82; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 130 sq.; A. Moret,

*Du caractère religieux de la royauté Pharaonique*, p. 153, note 1; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, li. 122, 124 sq.; Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos*, pp. 27, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 15. See above, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 164-168.

<sup>4</sup> A. Mariette-Bey, *Dendérah*, iv. pl. 66.

<sup>5</sup> A. Mariette-Bey, *Dendérah*, iv. pl. 72. Compare E. Lefébure, *Le mythe Osirien*, pp. 194, 196, who re-

monuments as an offering presented to Osiris, and a manuscript of the Louvre speaks of the cedar as sprung from him.<sup>1</sup> The sycamore and the tamarisk were also his trees. In inscriptions he is spoken of as residing in them;<sup>2</sup> and in tombs his mother Nut is often portrayed standing in the midst of a sycamore-tree and pouring a libation for the benefit of the dead.<sup>3</sup> Further, in a sepulchre at How (Diospolis Parva) a tamarisk is depicted overshadowing the tomb of Osiris, while a bird is perched among the branches with the significant legend "the soul of Osiris,"<sup>4</sup> showing that the spirit of the dead god was believed to haunt his sacred tree.<sup>5</sup> Again, in the series of sculptures which illustrate the mystic history of Osiris in the great temple of Isis at Philae, a tamarisk is figured with two men pouring water on it. The accompanying inscription leaves no doubt, says Brugsch, that the verdure of the earth was believed to be connected with the verdure of the tree, and that the sculpture refers to the grave of Osiris at Philae, of which Plutarch tells us that it was overshadowed by a *methide* plant, taller than any olive-tree. This sculpture, it may be observed, occurs in the same chamber in which the god is represented as a corpse with ears of corn springing from him.<sup>6</sup> In inscriptions he is referred to as "the one in the tree," "the solitary one in the acacia," and so forth.<sup>7</sup> On the monuments he sometimes appears as a mummy covered

gards the tree as a conifer. But it is perhaps a tamarisk.

<sup>1</sup> E. Lefébure, *op. cit.* pp. 195, 197.

<sup>2</sup> S. Birch, in Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. 84.

<sup>3</sup> Wilkinson, *op. cit.* iii. 62-64; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 106 sq.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, i. 185.

<sup>4</sup> Wilkinson, *op. cit.* iii. 349 sq.; A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, p. 368; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, p. 621.

<sup>5</sup> We may compare a belief of some of the Californian Indians that the owl

is the guardian spirit and deity of the "California big tree," and that it is equally unlucky to fell the tree or to shoot the bird. See S. Powers, *Tribes of California*, p. 398.

<sup>6</sup> Wilkinson, *op. cit.* iii. 349 sq.; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, p. 621; R. V. Lanson, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, tav. cclxiii.; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 20. In this passage of Plutarch it has been proposed by G. Parthey to read *απρίαν* (tamarisk) for *μεθίδης* (*methide*), and the conjecture appears to be accepted by Wilkinson, *loc. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> E. Lefébure, *La mythe Osirien*, p. 191.



with a tree or with plants; <sup>1</sup> and trees are represented growing from his grave.<sup>2</sup>

It accords with the character of Osiris as a tree-spirit that his worshippers were forbidden to injure fruit-trees, and with his character as a god of vegetation in general that they were not allowed to stop up wells of water, which are so important for the irrigation of hot southern lands.<sup>3</sup> According to one legend, he taught men to train the vine to poles, to prune its superfluous foliage, and to extract the juice of the grape.<sup>4</sup> The ivy was sacred to him, and was called his plant because it is always green.<sup>5</sup>

Osiris in relation to fruit-trees, wells, the vine and ivy.

### § 3. *Osiris a God of Fertility*

As a god of vegetation Osiris was naturally conceived as a god of creative energy in general, since men at a certain stage of evolution fail to distinguish between the reproductive powers of animals and of plants. Hence a striking feature in his worship was the coarse but expressive symbolism by which this aspect of his nature was presented to the eye not merely of the initiated but of the multitude. At his festival women used to go about the villages singing songs in his praise and carrying obscene images of him which they set in motion by means of strings.<sup>6</sup> The custom was probably a charm to ensure the growth of the crops. A similar image of him, decked with all the fruits of the earth, is said to have stood in a temple before a figure of Isis,<sup>7</sup> and in the chambers dedicated to him at Philae the dead god is portrayed lying on his bier in an attitude which indicates in the plainest way that even in death his generative virtue was not extinct but

Osiris perhaps conceived as a god of fertility in general.

<sup>1</sup> E. Lefébure, *op. cit.* p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> R. V. Lanson, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, tav. cciv.; G. Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, li. 570, fig.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35. One of the points in which the myths of Isis and Demeter agree is that both goddesses in the search for the loved and lost one are said to have sat down, sad at heart and weary, on the edge of a well. Hence those who had been initiated at Eleusis were forbidden to sit on a well. See Plutarch, *Isis et*

*Osiris*, 15; Homer, *Hymn to Demeter*, 98 sq.; Pausanias, i. 39. 1; Apollodorus, i. 5. 1; Nicander, *Theriaca*, 486; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 20, p. 16 ed. Potter.

<sup>4</sup> Tibullus, i. 7. 33-36.

<sup>5</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 17. 4 sq.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, li. 48; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 12, 18, 36, 51; Diodorus Siculus, i. 21. 5, i. 22. 6 sq., iv. 6. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, v. 7, p. 144 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin.

only suspended, ready to prove a source of life and fertility to the world when the opportunity should offer.<sup>1</sup> Hymns addressed to Osiris contain allusions to this important side of his nature. In one of them it is said that the world waxes green in triumph through him, and another declares, "Thou art the father and mother of mankind, they live on thy breath, they subsist on the flesh of thy body."<sup>2</sup> We may conjecture that in this paternal aspect he was supposed, like other gods of fertility, to bless men and women with offspring, and that the processions at his festival were intended to promote this object as well as to quicken the seed in the ground. It would be to misjudge ancient religion to denounce as lewd and profligate the emblems and the ceremonies which the Egyptians employed for the purpose of giving effect to this conception of the divine power. The ends which they proposed to themselves in these rites were natural and laudable; only the means they adopted to compass them were mistaken. A similar fallacy induced the Greeks to adopt a like symbolism in their Dionysiac festivals, and the superficial but striking resemblance thus produced between the two religions has perhaps more than anything else misled inquirers, both ancient and modern, into identifying worships which, though certainly akin in nature, are perfectly distinct and independent in origin.<sup>3</sup>

#### § 4. *Osiris a God of the Dead*

We have seen that in one of his aspects Osiris was the ruler and judge of the dead.<sup>4</sup> To a people like the Egyptians, who not only believed in a life beyond the grave but actually spent much of their time, labour, and money in preparing for it, this office of the god must have appeared hardly, if

As god of the corn Osiris came to be viewed as the god of the resurrection.

<sup>1</sup> A. Mariette-Bey, *Dendrah*, iv. pl. 66, 68, 69, 70, 88, 89, 90. Compare R. V. Lanson, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, tavv. cclxxi., cclxxii., cclxxvi., cclxxxv., cclxxxvi., cclxxxvii., cclxxxix., ccxc.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 132, 136, 137.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Margaret A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos*, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> That the Greek Dionysus was nothing but a slightly disguised form of the Egyptian Osiris has been held by Herodotus in ancient and by Mr. P. Foucart in modern times. See Herodotus, ii. 49; P. Foucart, *Le culte de Dionysos en Attique* (Paris, 1904) (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xxxvii.).

<sup>4</sup> Above, pp. 274 sq.



at all, less important than his function of making the earth to bring forth its fruits in due season. We may assume that in the faith of his worshippers the two provinces of the god were intimately connected. In laying their dead in the grave they committed them to his keeping who could raise them from the dust to life eternal, even as he caused the seed to spring from the ground. Of that faith the corn-stuffed effigies of Osiris found in Egyptian tombs furnish an eloquent and unequivocal testimony.<sup>1</sup> They were at once an emblem and an instrument of resurrection. Thus from the sprouting of the grain the ancient Egyptians drew an augury of human immortality. They are not the only people who have built the same far-reaching hopes on the same slender foundation. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."<sup>2</sup>

A god who thus fed his people with his own broken body in this life, and who held out to them a promise of a blissful eternity in a better world hereafter, naturally reigned supreme in their affections. We need not wonder, therefore, that in Egypt the worship of the other gods was overshadowed by that of Osiris, and that while they were revered each in his own district, he and his divine partner Isis were adored in all.<sup>3</sup>

Great popularity of the worship of Osiris.

<sup>1</sup> Above, pp. 324 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, ii. 42. Compare E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 115 sq., 203 sq.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians xv. 36-38, 42-44.

## CHAPTER VI

### ISIS

Multi-  
farious  
attributes  
of Isis.

THE original meaning of the goddess Isis is still more difficult to determine than that of her brother and husband Osiris. Her attributes and epithets were so numerous that in the hieroglyphics she is called "the many-named," "the thousand-named," and in Greek inscriptions "the myriad-named."<sup>1</sup> The late eminent Dutch scholar C. P. Tiele confessed candidly that "it is now impossible to tell precisely to what natural phenomena the character of Isis at first referred." Yet he adds, "Originally she was a goddess of fecundity."<sup>2</sup> Similarly Dr. Budge writes that "Isis was the great and beneficent goddess and mother, whose influence and love pervaded all heaven and earth and the abode of the dead, and she was the personification of the great feminine, creative power which conceived, and brought forth every living creature and thing, from the gods in heaven to man on the earth, and to the insect on the ground; what she brought forth she protected, and cared for, and fed, and nourished, and she employed her life in using her power graciously and successfully, not only in creating new beings but in restoring those that were dead. She was, besides these things, the highest type of a faithful and loving wife and mother, and it was in this capacity that the Egyptians honoured and worshipped her most."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, p. 645; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 695; *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, iii. p. 1232, No. 4941. Compare H. Deissau, *In-*

*scriptiones Latinae Selectae*, No. 4376A.

<sup>2</sup> C. P. Tiele, *History of Egyptian Religion*, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 203 sq.



Thus in her character of a goddess of fecundity Isis answered to the great mother goddesses of Asia, though she differed from them in the chastity and fidelity of her conjugal life; for while they were unmarried and dissolute, she had a husband and was a true wife to him as well as an affectionate mother to their son. Hence her beautiful Madonna-like figure reflects a more refined state of society and of morals than the coarse, sensual, cruel figures of Astarte, Anaitis, Cybele, and the rest of that crew. A clear trace, indeed, of an ethical standard very different from our own lingers in her double relation of sister and wife to Osiris; but in most other respects she is rather late than primitive, the full-blown flower rather than the seed of a long religious development. The attributes ascribed to her were too various to be all her own. They were graces borrowed from many lesser deities, sweets rifled from a thousand humbler plants to feed the honey of her superb efflorescence. Yet in her complex nature it is perhaps still possible to detect the original nucleus round which by a slow process of accretion the other elements gathered. For if her brother and husband Osiris was indeed the corn-god, as we have seen reason to believe, she must surely have been the corn-goddess. There are at least some grounds for thinking so. For if we may trust Diodorus Siculus, whose authority appears to have been the Egyptian historian Manetho, the discovery of wheat and barley was attributed to Isis, and at her festivals stalks of these grains were carried in procession to commemorate the boon she had conferred on men.<sup>1</sup> A further detail is added by Augustine. He says that Isis made the discovery of barley at the moment when she was sacrificing to the common ancestors of her husband and herself, all of whom had been kings, and that she showed the newly discovered ears of barley to Osiris and his councillor Thoth or Mercury, as Roman writers called him. That is why, adds Augustine, they identify Isis with Ceres.<sup>2</sup> Further,

How Isis resembled yet differed from the Mother Goddesses of Asia.

Isis perhaps originally a goddess of the corn.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 1 sq. Eusebius (*Præparatio Evangelii*, iii. 3) quotes from Diodorus a long passage on the early religion of Egypt, prefacing it with the remark that Diodorus's account of the sub-

ject was more concise than that of Manetho.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, viii. 27. Tertullian says that Isis wore a wreath of the corn she had discovered (*De corona*, 7).

at harvest-time, when the Egyptian reapers had cut the first stalks, they laid them down and beat their breasts, wailing and calling upon Isis.<sup>1</sup> The custom has been already explained as a lament for the corn-spirit slain under the sickle.<sup>2</sup> Amongst the epithets by which Isis is designated in the inscriptions are "creatress of the green crop," "the Green One, whose greenness is like the greenness of the earth," and "mistress of bread."<sup>3</sup> According to Brugsch she is "not only the creatress of the fresh verdure of vegetation which covers the earth, but is actually the green corn-field itself, which is personified as a goddess."<sup>4</sup> This is confirmed by her epithet *Sochit* or *Sochet*, meaning "a corn-field," a sense which the word still retains in Coptic.<sup>5</sup> The Greeks conceived of Isis as a corn-goddess, for they identified her with Demeter.<sup>6</sup> In a Greek epigram she is described as "she who has given birth to the fruits of the earth," and "the mother of the ears of corn";<sup>7</sup> and in a hymn composed in her honour she speaks of herself as "queen of the wheat-field," and is described as "charged with the care of the fruitful furrow's wheat-rich path."<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, Greek or Roman artists often represented her with ears of corn on her head or in her hand.<sup>9</sup>

Refinement  
and spirit-  
ualisation  
of Isis in  
later times:  
the popu-  
larity of  
her worship  
in the  
Roman  
empire.

Such, we may suppose, was Isis in the olden time, a rustic Corn-Mother adored with uncouth rites by Egyptian swains. But the homely features of the clownish goddess could hardly be traced in the refined, the saintly form which, spiritualised by ages of religious evolution, she presented to her worshippers of after days as the true wife, the tender mother, the beneficent queen of nature, encircled with the nimbus of moral purity, of immemorial and mysterious sanctity. Thus chastened and transfigured she won many hearts far beyond the

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 14. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, p. 647.

<sup>4</sup> H. Brugsch, *op. cit.*, p. 649. Compare E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 216.

<sup>5</sup> H. Brugsch, *loc. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, ii. 59, 156; Diodorus Siculus, i. 13, 25, 96; Apollodorus,

ii. 1. 3; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 212. See further W. Drexler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 443 sq.

<sup>7</sup> *Anthologia Planudea*, cclxiv. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Epigrammata Graeca ex lapidibus collecta*, ed. G. Kaibel, No. 1028, pp. 437 sq.; *Orphica*, ed. E. Abel, pp. 295 sqq.

<sup>9</sup> W. Drexler, *op. cit.* ii. 448 sqq.



boundaries of her native land. In that welter of religions which accompanied the decline of national life in antiquity her worship was one of the most popular at Rome and throughout the empire. Some of the Roman emperors themselves were openly addicted to it. And however the religion of Isis may, like any other, have been often worn as a cloak by men and women of loose life, her rites appear on the whole to have been honourably distinguished by a dignity and composure, a solemnity and decorum well fitted to soothe the troubled mind, to ease the burdened heart. They appealed therefore to gentle spirits, and above all to women, whom the bloody and licentious rites of other Oriental goddesses only shocked and repelled. We need not wonder, then, that in a period of decadence, when traditional faiths were shaken, when systems clashed, when men's minds were disquieted, when the fabric of empire itself, once deemed eternal, began to show ominous rents and fissures, the serene figure of Isis with her spiritual calm, her gracious promise of immortality, should have appeared to many like a star in a stormy sky, and should have roused in their breasts a rapture of devotion not unlike that which was paid in the Middle Ages to the Virgin Mary. Indeed her stately ritual, with its shaven and tonsured priests, its matins and vespers, its tinkling music, its baptism and aspersions of holy water, its solemn processions, its jewelled images of the Mother of God, presented many points of similarity to the pomps and ceremonies of Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> The resemblance need not be purely acci-

Resem-  
blance of  
Isis to the  
Madonna.

<sup>1</sup> L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 373-385; J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 77-81; E. Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, pp. 570 sqq.; J. Reville, *La religion romaine à Rome sous les Sévères*, pp. 54-61; G. Lafaye, *Histoire du culte des divinités d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1884); E. Meyer and W. Drexler, s.v. "Isis," in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 360 sqq.; S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*,<sup>3</sup> pp. 79 sq., 85 sqq.; *id.*, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (London, 1904), pp. 560 sqq. The chief passage on

the worship of Isis in the West is the eleventh book of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*. On the reputation which the goddess enjoyed as a healer of the sick see Diodorus Siculus, i. 25; W. Drexler, *op. cit.* ii. 521 sqq. The divine partner of Isis in later times, especially outside of Egypt, was Serapis, that is Osiris-Apis (*Aiar-Iffapi*), the sacred Apis bull of Memphis, identified after death with Osiris. His oldest sanctuary was at Memphis (Pausanias, i. 18. 4), and there was one at Babylon in the time of Alexander the Great (Plotarch, *Alexander*, 76; Arrian, *Anabasis*, vii.

dental. Ancient Egypt may have contributed its share to the gorgeous symbolism of the Catholic Church as well as to the pale abstractions of her theology.<sup>1</sup> Certainly in art the figure of Isis suckling the infant Horus is so like that of the Madonna and child that it has sometimes received the adoration of ignorant Christians.<sup>2</sup> And to Isis in her later character of patroness of mariners the Virgin Mary perhaps owes her beautiful epithet of *Stella Maris*, "Star of the Sea," under which she is adored by tempest-tossed sailors.<sup>3</sup> The attributes of a marine deity may have been bestowed on Isis by the sea-faring Greeks of Alexandria. They are quite foreign to her original character and to the habits of the Egyptians, who had no love of the sea.<sup>4</sup> On this hypothesis Sirius, the bright star of Isis, which on July mornings rises from the glassy waves of the eastern Mediterranean, a harbinger of halcyon weather to mariners, was the true *Stella Maris*, "the Star of the Sea."

26). Ptolemy I, or II, built a great and famous temple in his honour at Alexandria, where he set up an image of the god which was commonly said to have been imported from Sinope in Pontus. See Tacitus, *Histor.* iv. 83 *sq.*; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 27-29; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* iv. 48, p. 42 ed. Potter. In after ages the institution of the worship of Serapis was attributed to this Ptolemy, but all that the politic Macedonian monarch appears to have done was to assimilate the Egyptian Osiris to the Greek Pluto, and so to set up a god whom Egyptians and Greeks could unite in worshipping. Serapis gradually assumed the attributes of Aesculapius, the Greek god of heal-

ing, in addition to those of Pluto, the Greek god of the dead. See G. Lafaye, *Histoire du culte des divinités d'Alexandrie*, pp. 16 *sqq.*; A. Wiedemann, *Herodots zweites Buch*, p. 589; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 195 *sqq.*; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 216-218.

<sup>1</sup> The resemblance of Isis to the Virgin Mary has often been pointed out. See W. Drexler, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. röm. Mythologie*, ii. 428 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> W. Drexler, *op. cit.* ii. 430 *sq.*

<sup>3</sup> Th. Trede, *Das Heidentum in der römischen Kirche*, iii. 144 *sq.*

<sup>4</sup> On this later aspect of Isis see W. Drexler, *op. cit.* ii. 474 *sqq.*



## CHAPTER VII

### OSIRIS AND THE SUN

OSIRIS has been sometimes interpreted as the sun-god; and in modern times this view has been held by so many distinguished writers that it deserves a brief examination. If we inquire on what evidence Osiris has been identified with the sun or the sun-god, it will be found on analysis to be minute in quantity and dubious, where it is not absolutely worthless, in quality. The diligent Jablonski, the first modern scholar to collect and sift the testimony of classical writers on Egyptian religion, says that it can be shown in many ways that Osiris is the sun, and that he could produce a cloud of witnesses to prove it, but that it is needless to do so, since no learned man is ignorant of the fact.<sup>1</sup> Of the writers whom he condescends to quote, the only two who expressly identify Osiris with the sun are Diodorus and Macrobius. The passage in Diodorus runs thus: <sup>2</sup> "It is said that the aboriginal inhabitants of Egypt, looking up to the sky, and smitten with awe and wonder at the nature of the universe, supposed that there were two gods, eternal and primaeval, the sun and the moon, of whom they named the sun Osiris and the moon Isis." Even if Diodorus's authority for this statement is Manetho, as there is some ground for believing,<sup>3</sup> little or no weight can be attached to it. For it is plainly a philosophical, and therefore a late, explanation of the first beginnings of Egyptian religion, reminding us of Kant's familiar saying about the starry heavens and the moral law rather than of the

Osiris interpreted as the sun by many modern writers.

<sup>1</sup> Jablonski, *Pantheon Aegyptiorum* (Frankfort, 1750), i. 125 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 11. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 347, note 1.

rude traditions of a primitive people. Jablonski's second authority, Macrobius, is no better, but rather worse. For Macrobius was the father of that large family of mythologists who resolve all or most gods into the sun. According to him Mercury was the sun, Mars was the sun, Janus was the sun, Saturn was the sun, so was Jupiter, also Nemesis, likewise Pan, and so on through a great part of the pantheon.<sup>1</sup> It was natural, therefore, that he should identify Osiris with the sun,<sup>2</sup> but his reasons for doing so are exceedingly slight. He refers to the ceremonies of alternate lamentation and joy as if they reflected the vicissitudes of the great luminary in his course through the sky. Further, he argues that Osiris must be the sun because an eye was one of his symbols. It is true that an eye was a symbol of Osiris,<sup>3</sup> and it is also true that the sun was often called "the eye of Horus";<sup>4</sup> yet the coincidence hardly suffices to establish the identity of the two deities. The opinion that Osiris was the sun is also mentioned, but not accepted, by Plutarch,<sup>5</sup> and it is referred to by Firmicus Maternus.<sup>6</sup>

The later identification of Osiris with Ra, the sun-god, does not prove that Osiris was originally the sun.

Amongst modern scholars, Lepsius, in identifying Osiris with the sun, appears to rely mainly on the passage of Diodorus already quoted. But the monuments, he adds, also show "that down to a late time Osiris was sometimes conceived as *Ra*. In this quality he is named *Osiris-Ra* even in the 'Book of the Dead,' and Isis is often called 'the royal consort of Ra.'"<sup>7</sup> That Ra was both the physical sun and the sun-god is undisputed; but with every deference for the authority of so great a scholar as Lepsius, it may be doubted whether the identification of Osiris with Ra can be accepted as proof that Osiris was originally the sun.

<sup>1</sup> See Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, bk. i.

<sup>2</sup> *Saturn*, i. 21. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 10 and 51; Sir J. G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians* (London, 1878), iii. 353; R. V. Lantzone, *Dizionario di Mitologia Egizia*, pp. 782 sq.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 113 sq.

<sup>4</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of*

*the Egyptians*, i. 467; A. Erman, *Die ägyptische Religion*, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Isis et Osiris*, 52.

<sup>6</sup> *De errore profan. religionum*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Lepsius, "Ueber den ersten ägyptischen Götterkreis und seine geschichtlich-mythologische Entstehung," in *Abhandlungen der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1851, pp. 194 sq.



For the religion of ancient Egypt<sup>1</sup> may be described as a confederacy of local cults which, while maintaining against each other a certain measure of jealous and even hostile independence, were yet constantly subjected to the fusing and amalgamating influence of political centralisation and philosophic thought. The history of the religion appears to have largely consisted of a struggle between these opposite forces or tendencies. On the one side there was the conservative tendency to preserve the local cults with all their distinctive features, fresh, sharp, and crisp as they had been handed down from an immemorial past. On the other side there was the progressive tendency, favoured by the gradual fusion of the people under a powerful central government, first to dull the edge of these provincial distinctions, and finally to break them down completely and merge them in a single national religion. The conservative party probably mustered in its ranks the great bulk of the people, their prejudices and affections being warmly enlisted in favour of the local deity, with whose temple and rites they had been familiar from childhood; and the popular dislike of change, based on the endearing effect of old association, must have been strongly reinforced by the less disinterested opposition of the local clergy, whose material interests would necessarily suffer with any decay of their shrines. On the other hand the kings, whose power and glory rose with the political and ecclesiastical consolidation of the realm, were the natural champions of religious unity; and their efforts would be seconded by the refined and thoughtful minority, who could hardly fail to be shocked by the many barbarous and revolting elements in the local rites. As usually happens in such cases, the process of religious unification appears to have been largely effected by discovering points of similarity, real or imaginary, between the provincial deities, which were thereupon declared to be only different names or manifestations of the same god.

Of the deities who thus acted as centres of attraction, absorbing in themselves a multitude of minor divinities, by

<sup>1</sup> The view here taken of the history of Egyptian religion is based on the sketch in Ad. Erman's *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp.

351 sqq. Compare C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 79 sq

Such identifications sprang from attempts to unify and amalgamate the many local cults of Egypt.

Most Egyptian gods were at some time identified with the sun.

Attempt of Amenophis IV. to abolish all gods except the sun-god.

far the most important was the sun-god Ra. There appear to have been few gods in Egypt who were not at one time or other identified with him. Ammon of Thebes, Horus of the East, Horus of Edfu, Chnum of Elephantine, Tum of Heliopolis, all were regarded as one god, the sun. Even the water-god Sobk, in spite of his crocodile shape, did not escape the same fate. Indeed one king, Amenophis IV., undertook to sweep away all the old gods at a stroke and replace them by a single god, the "great living disc of the sun."<sup>1</sup> In the hymns composed in his honour, this deity is referred to as "the living disc of the sun, besides whom there is none other." He is said to have made "the far heaven" and "men, beasts, and birds; he strengtheneth the eyes with his beams, and when he showeth himself, all flowers live and grow, the meadows flourish at his upgoing and are drunken at his sight, all cattle skip on their feet, and the birds that are in the marsh flutter for joy." It is he "who bringeth the years, createth the months, maketh the days, calculateth the hours, the lord of time, by whom men reckon." In his zeal for the unity of god, the king commanded to erase the names of all other gods from the monuments, and to destroy their images. His rage was particularly directed against the god Ammon, whose name and likeness were effaced wherever they were found; even the sanctity of the tomb was violated in order to destroy the memorials of the hated deity. In some of the halls of the great temples at Carnac, Luxor, and other places, all the names of the gods, with a few chance exceptions, were scratched out. The monarch even changed his own name, Amenophis, because it was compounded of Ammon, and took instead the name of Chu-en-aten, "gleam of the sun's disc." Thebes itself, the ancient capital of his glorious ancestors, full of the monuments of their piety and idolatry, was no longer a fit home for the puritan king. He deserted

<sup>1</sup> On this attempted revolution in religion see Lepsius, in *Verhandl. d. königl. Akad. d. Wissensch. zu Berlin*, 1851, pp. 196-201; A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 74 sq., 355-357; id., *Die ägyptische Religion*, pp. 64-72; H. Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, i. 441

sqq.; A. Wiedemann, *Ägyptische Geschichte*, pp. 396 sqq.; id., *Die Religion der alten Ägypter*, pp. 20-22; C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 84-92; G. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, i. 316 sqq.; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 68-84.



it, and built for himself a new capital in Middle Egypt at the place now known as Tell-el-Amarna. Here in a few years a city of palaces and gardens rose like an exhalation at his command, and here the king, his dearly loved wife and children, and his complaisant courtiers led a merry life. The grave and sombre ritual of Thebes was discarded. The sun-god was worshipped with songs and hymns, with the music of harps and flutes, with offerings of cakes and fruits and flowers. Blood seldom stained his kindly altars. The king himself celebrated the offices of religion. He preached with unction, and we may be sure that his courtiers listened with at least an outward semblance of devotion. From the too-faithful portraits of himself which he has bequeathed to us we can still picture to ourselves the heretic king in the pulpit, with his tall, lanky figure, his bandy legs, his pot-belly, his long, lean, haggard face aglow with the fever of religious fanaticism. Yet "the doctrine," as he loved to call it, which he proclaimed to his hearers was apparently no stern message of renunciation in this world, of terrors in the world to come. The thoughts of death, of judgment, and of a life beyond the grave, which weighed like a nightmare on the minds of the Egyptians, seem to have been banished for a time. Even the name of Osiris, the awful judge of the dead, is not once mentioned in the graves at Tell-el-Amarna. All this lasted only during the life of the reformer. His death was followed by a violent reaction. The old gods were reinstated in their rank and privileges: their names and images were restored; and new temples were built. But all the shrines and palaces reared by the late king were thrown down: even the sculptures that referred to him and to his god in rock-tombs and on the sides of hills were erased or filled up with stucco: his name appears on no later monument, and was carefully omitted from all official lists. The new capital was abandoned, never to be inhabited again. Its plan can still be traced in the sands of the desert.

Failure  
of the  
attempt

This attempt of King Amenophis IV. is only an extreme example of a tendency which appears to have affected the religion of Egypt as far back as we can

Identification with the sun is no evidence of the original character of an Egyptian god.

trace it. Therefore, to come back to our point, in attempting to discover the original character of any Egyptian god, no weight can be given to the identification of him with other gods, least of all with the sun-god Ra. Far from helping to follow up the trail, these identifications only cross and confuse it. The best evidence for the original character of the Egyptian gods is to be found in their ritual and myths, so far as these are known, and in the manner in which they are portrayed on the monuments. It is mainly on evidence drawn from these sources that I rest my interpretation of Osiris as a deity primarily of the fruits of the earth.

The solar theory of Osiris does not explain his death and resurrection.

The ground upon which some recent writers seem chiefly to rely for the identification of Osiris with the sun is that the story of his death fits better with the solar phenomena than with any other in nature. It may readily be admitted that the daily appearance and disappearance of the sun might very naturally be expressed by a myth of his death and resurrection; and writers who regard Osiris as the sun are careful to indicate that it is the diurnal, and not the annual, course of the sun to which they understand the myth to apply. Thus Renouf, who identified Osiris with the sun, admitted that the Egyptian sun could not with any show of reason be described as dead in winter.<sup>1</sup> But if his daily death was the theme of the legend, why was it celebrated by an annual ceremony? This fact alone seems fatal to the interpretation of the myth as descriptive of sunset and sunrise. Again, though the sun may be said to die daily, in what sense can he be said to be torn in pieces?<sup>2</sup>

In the course of our inquiry it has, I trust, been made

<sup>1</sup> P. Le Page Renouf, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion* (London, 1884), p. 113. Compare Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i. §§ 55, 57.

<sup>2</sup> The late eminent scholar C. P. Tiele, who formerly interpreted Osiris as a sun-god (*History of Egyptian Religion*, pp. 43 sqq.), afterwards adopted a view of his nature which approaches more nearly to the one advocated in this book. See his *Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 35 sq., 123. Professor Maspero has also abandoned

the theory that Osiris was the sun; he now supposes that the deity originally personified the Nile. See his *Histoire ancienne* (Paris, 1886), p. 35; and his *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient classique*, i. (Paris, 1895), p. 130. Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge also interprets Osiris as the Nile (*The Gods of the Egyptians*, i. 122, 123), and this view was held by some ancient writers (Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39). Compare Miss M. A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos* (London, 1904), p. 29.



clear that there is another natural phenomenon to which the conception of death and resurrection is as applicable as to sunset and sunrise, and which, as a matter of fact, has been so conceived and represented in folk-custom. This phenomenon is the annual growth and decay of vegetation. A strong reason for interpreting the death of Osiris as the decay of vegetation rather than as the sunset is to be found in the general, though not unanimous, voice of antiquity, which classed together the worship and myths of Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Dionysus, and Demeter, as religions of essentially the same type.<sup>1</sup> The consensus of ancient opinion on this subject seems too great to be rejected as a mere fancy. So closely did the rites of Osiris resemble those of Adonis at Byblus that some of the people of Byblus themselves maintained that it was Osiris and not Adonis whose death was mourned by them.<sup>2</sup> Such a view could certainly not have been held if the rituals of the two gods had not been so alike as to be almost indistinguishable. Herodotus found the similarity between the rites of Osiris and Dionysus so great, that he thought it impossible the latter could have arisen independently; they must, he thought, have been recently borrowed, with slight alterations, by the Greeks from the Egyptians.<sup>3</sup> Again, Plutarch, a very keen student of comparative religion, insists upon the detailed resemblance of the rites of Osiris to those of Dionysus.<sup>4</sup> We cannot reject the evidence of such intelligent and trustworthy witnesses on plain matters of fact which fell under their own cognisance. Their explanations of the worships it is indeed possible to reject, for the meaning of religious

The death and resurrection of Osiris are more naturally explained by the annual decay and growth of vegetation.

<sup>1</sup> For the identification of Osiris with Dionysus, and of Isis with Demeter, see Herodotus, ii. 42, 49, 59, 144, 156; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 13, 35; Diodorus Siculus, i. 13, 25, 96, iv. 1; *Orphica*, Hymn 42; Eusebius, *Præpar. Evang.* iii. 11, 31; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* xi. 287; *id.* on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 166; J. Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 212; *Δωρὴνικα*, xxii. 2, in *Mythographi Graeci*, ed. A. Westermann, p. 368; Nonnus, *Dionys.* iv. 269 *sq.*; Cornutus, *De natura deorum*, 28; Ausonius, *Epigrammata*, 29 and 30. For the identification of Osiris

with Adonis and Attis see Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium hæresium*, v. 9, p. 168 ed. Duncker and Schneidewin; *Orphica*, Hymn 42. For the identification of Attis, Adonis, and Dionysus see Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iii. 23 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, lxxvii. 448); Plutarch, *Quæstiones Convivales*, iv. 5, 3; Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* ii. 19, p. 16 ed. Potter.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, ii. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 35.

cults is often open to question ; but resemblances of ritual are matters of observation. Therefore, those who explain Osiris as the sun are driven to the alternative of either dismissing as mistaken the testimony of antiquity to the similarity of the rites of Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Dionysus, and Demeter, or of interpreting all these rites as sun-worship. No modern scholar has fairly faced and accepted either side of this alternative. To accept the former would be to affirm that we know the rites of these deities better than the men who practised, or at least who witnessed them. To accept the latter would involve a wrenching, clipping, mangling, and distorting of myth and ritual from which even Macrobius shrank.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the view that the essence of all these rites was the mimic death and revival of vegetation, explains them separately and collectively in an easy and natural way, and harmonises with the general testimony borne by the ancients to their substantial similarity.

<sup>1</sup> Osiris, Attis, Adonis, and Dionysus were all resolved by him into the sun ; but he spared Demeter (Ceres), whom,

however, he interpreted as the moon. See the *Saturnalia*, bk. i.



## CHAPTER VIII

### OSIRIS AND THE MOON

BEFORE we conclude this study of Osiris it will be worth while to consider an ancient view of his nature, which deserves more attention than it has received in modern times. We are told by Plutarch that among the philosophers who saw in the gods of Egypt personifications of natural objects and forces, there were some who interpreted Osiris as the moon and his enemy Typhon as the sun, "because the moon, with her humid and generative light, is favourable to the propagation of animals and the growth of plants; while the sun with his fierce fire scorches and burns up all growing things, renders the greater part of the earth uninhabitable by reason of his blaze, and often overpowers the moon herself."<sup>1</sup> Whatever may be thought of the physical qualities here attributed to the moon, the arguments adduced by the ancients to prove the identity of Osiris with that luminary carry with them a weight which has at least not been lightened by the results of modern research. An examination of them and of other evidence pointing in the same direction will, perhaps, help to set the original character of the Egyptian deity in a clearer light.

1. Osiris was said to have lived or reigned twenty-eight years. This might fairly be taken as a mythical expression for a lunar month.<sup>2</sup>

2. His body was reported to have been rent into fourteen pieces.<sup>3</sup> This might be interpreted of the waning moon,

Osiris was sometimes interpreted by the ancients as the moon.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 13, 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 18, 42. The hieroglyphic texts sometimes speak of fourteen pieces, and sometimes of sixteen.

But fourteen seems to have been the true number, because the inscriptions of Dendera, which refer to the rites of Osiris, describe the mystic image of the god as composed of fourteen

Evidence  
of the  
association  
of Osiris  
with the  
moon.

which appears to lose a portion of itself on each of the fourteen days that make up the second half of a lunar month. It is expressly said that his enemy Typhon found the body of Osiris at the full moon;<sup>1</sup> thus the dismemberment of the god would begin with the waning of the moon. To primitive man it seems manifest that the waning moon is actually dwindling, and he naturally enough explains its diminution by supposing that the planet is being rent or broken in pieces or eaten away. The Klamath Indians of Oregon speak of the moon as "the one broken to pieces" with reference to its changing aspect; they never apply such a term to the sun,<sup>2</sup> whose apparent change of bulk at different seasons of the year is far too insignificant to attract the attention of the savage, or at least to be described by him in such forcible language. The Dacotas believe that when the moon is full, a great many little mice begin to nibble at one side of it and do not cease till they have eaten it all up, after which a new moon is born and grows to maturity, only to share the fate of its countless predecessors.<sup>3</sup> A similar belief is held by the Huzuls of the Carpathians, except that they ascribe the destruction of the old moon to wolves instead of to mice.<sup>4</sup>

3. At the new moon of the month Phamenoth, which was the beginning of spring, the Egyptians celebrated what they called "the entry of Osiris into the moon."<sup>5</sup>

4. At the ceremony called "the burial of Osiris" the Egyptians made a crescent-shaped chest "because the moon, when it approaches the sun, assumes the form of a crescent and vanishes."<sup>6</sup>

5. The bull Apis, held to be an image of the soul of Osiris,<sup>7</sup> was born of a cow which was believed to have been impregnated, not in the vulgar way by a bull, but by a divine influence emanating from the moon.<sup>8</sup>

pieces. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, ii. 126 sq.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8.

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Gatschet, *The Klamath Indians of South-Western Oregon* (Washington, 1890), p. lxxxix.

<sup>3</sup> S. R. Riggs, *Dakota Grammar, Texts, and Ethnography* (Washington, 1893), p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> R. F. Kaindl, *Die Huzulen* (Vienna, 1894), p. 97.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 43.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 20, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Plutarch, *op. cit.* 43; *id.*, *Quæst. Conviv.* viii. 1. 3. Compare Herodotus, iii. 28; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* xi. 10; Mela, i. 9. 58.



6. Once a year, at the full moon, pigs were sacrificed simultaneously to the moon and Osiris.<sup>1</sup>

7. In a hymn supposed to be addressed by Isis to Osiris, it is said that Thoth—

*Placeth thy soul in the bark Ma-at,  
In that name which is thine, of GOD MOON.*

And again:—

*Thou who comest to us as a child each month,  
We do not cease to contemplate thee.  
Thine emanation heightens the brilliancy  
Of the stars of Orion in the firmament, etc.<sup>2</sup>*

Here then Osiris is identified with the moon in set terms. If in the same hymn he is said to "illuminate us like Ra" (the sun), that is obviously no reason for identifying him with the sun, but quite the contrary. For though the moon may reasonably be compared to the sun, neither the sun nor anything else can reasonably be compared to itself.

Now if Osiris was originally, as I suppose, a deity of vegetation, we can easily enough understand why in a later and more philosophic age he should come to be thus identified or confounded with the moon.<sup>3</sup> For as soon as he begins to meditate upon the causes of things, the early philosopher is led by certain obvious, though fallacious, appearances to regard the moon as the ultimate cause of the growth of plants. In the first place he associates its apparent growth and decay with the growth and decay of sublunary things, and imagines that in virtue of a secret sympathy the celestial phenomena really produce those terrestrial changes which in point of fact they merely resemble. Thus Pliny says that the moon may fairly be considered the planet of breath, "because it saturates the earth and by its approach fills bodies, while by its departure it empties them. Hence it

The identification of Osiris with the moon appears to be based on a comparatively late theory that all things grow and decay with the waxing and waning of the moon.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 47; Plutarch, *Isis et Osiris*, 8. As to pigs in relation to Osiris, see *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 305 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of the Past*, ii. 121 sq.; H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Ägypter*, pp. 629 sq.

<sup>3</sup> According to C. P. Tiele (*Geschichte der Religion im Altertum*, i. 79) the conception of Osiris as the moon was late and never became popular. This entirely accords with the view adopted in the text.

is," he goes on, "that shell-fish increase with the increase of the moon and that bloodless creatures especially feel breath at that time; even the blood of men grows and diminishes with the light of the moon, and leaves and herbage also feel the same influence, since the lunar energy penetrates all things."<sup>1</sup> "There is no doubt," writes Macrobius, "that the moon is the author and framer of mortal bodies, so much so that some things expand or shrink as it waxes or wanes."<sup>2</sup> Again, Aulus Gellius puts in the mouth of a friend the remark that "the same things which grow with the waxing, do dwindle with the waning moon," and he quotes from a commentary of Plutarch's on Hesiod a statement that the onion is the only vegetable which violates this great law of nature by sprouting in the wane and withering in the increase of the moon.<sup>3</sup> Scottish Highlanders allege that in the increase of the moon everything has a tendency to grow or stick together;<sup>4</sup> and they call the second moon of autumn "the ripening moon" (*Gealach an abachaidh*), because they imagine that crops ripen as much by its light as by day.<sup>5</sup>

Practical  
rules  
founded on  
this lunar  
theory.

From this supposed influence of the moon on the life of plants and animals, men in ancient and modern times have deduced a whole code of rules for the guidance of the husbandman, the shepherd, and others in the conduct of their affairs. Thus an ancient writer on agriculture lays it down as a maxim, that whatever is to be sown should be sown while the moon is waxing, and that whatever is to be cut or gathered should be cut or gathered while it is waning.<sup>6</sup> A modern treatise on superstition describes how the superstitious man regulates all his conduct by the moon: "Whatever he would have to grow, he sets about it when she is in her increase; but for what he would have less he chooses

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 221.

<sup>2</sup> Macrobius, *Comment. in somnium Scipionis*, l. 11. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Aulus Gellius, xx. 8. For the opinions of the ancients on this subject see further W. H. Roscher, *Über Selene und Verwandtes* (Leipzig, 1890), pp. 61-177.

<sup>4</sup> John Ramsay of Ochertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by A. Allardyce, ii. 449.

<sup>5</sup> J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1902), pp. 306-19.

<sup>6</sup> Palladius, *De re rustica*, i. 34. 8. Compare *id.* i. 6. 12; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xviii. 321, "omnia quae coeduntur, carpuntur, tenduntur innocentius de crescente luna quam crescente fiunt"; *Geoponica*, i. 6. 8, τὰς ἀκριβοῦς μὲν φθορὰς τῆς σελήνης ἀλλὰ ἀξιοῦνται φτεῖναι.



her wane."<sup>1</sup> In Germany the phases of the moon are observed by superstitious people at all the more or even less important actions of life, such as tilling the fields, building or changing houses, marriages, hair-cutting, bleeding, cupping, and so forth. The particular rules vary in different places, but the principle generally followed is that whatever is done to increase anything should be done while the moon is waxing; whatever is done to diminish anything should be done while the moon is waning. For example, sowing, planting, and grafting should be done in the first half of the moon, but the felling of timber and mowing should be done in the second half.<sup>2</sup> In various parts of Europe it is believed that plants, nails, hair, and corns, cut while the moon is on the increase, will grow again fast, but that if cut while it is on the decrease they will grow slowly or waste away.<sup>3</sup> Hence persons who wish their hair to grow thick and long should cut it in the first half of the moon.<sup>4</sup> On

Supposed  
influence  
of the  
phases of  
the moon  
on the  
operations  
of  
husbandry.

<sup>1</sup> J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 144, quoting Werenfels, *Dissertation upon Superstition* (London, 1748), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,<sup>3</sup> § 65, pp. 37 sq. Compare J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 595; Montanus, *Die deutsche Volksfeste, Volksbräuche und deutscher Volksaberglaube*, p. 128; M. Praetorius, *Deliciae Prusicæ* (Berlin, 1871), p. 18; *Am Urquell*, v. (1894) p. 173. The rule that the grafting of trees should be done at the waxing of the moon is laid down by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xvii. 108). At Deutsch-Zepling in Transylvania, by an inversion of the usual custom, seed is generally sown at the waning of the moon (A. Heinrich, *Agrarische Sitten und Gebräuche unter den Sachsen Siebenbürgens*, p. 7). Some French peasants also prefer to sow in the wane (F. Chapiseau, *Folk-lore de la Beauce et du Perche*, i. 291). In the Abruzzi also sowing and grafting are commonly done when the moon is on the wane; timber that is to be durable must be cut in January during the moon's decrease (G. Finamore, *Credenze, Usi e Costumi Abruzzesi*, p. 43).

<sup>3</sup> P. Sébillot, *Traditions et Superstitions de la Haute-Bretagne*, ii. 355; L. F. Sauvé, *Folk-lore des Hautes-*

*Voies*, p. 5; J. Brand, *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 150; Holzmayer, "Osilliana," *Verhandlungen der gelehrten Estnischen Gesellschaft zu Dorpat*, vii. (1872) p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> The rule is mentioned by Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum*, l. 37 (where we should probably read "*ne decrescens tendens calidus fiam*," and refer istaec to the former member of the preceding sentence); A. Wuttke, *l.c.*; Montanus, *op. cit.* p. 128; P. Sébillot, *l.c.*; E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 511, § 421; Tettau und Temme, *Volksagen Ostpreussens, Lithauens und Westpreussens*, p. 283; A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 386, § 92; L. Schandorp, in *Bavaria, Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iv. 2, p. 402; F. S. Krauss, *Volksaberglaube und religiöser Brauch der Südslaven*, p. 15; E. Krause, "Abergläubische Kuren und sonstiger Aberglaube in Berlin," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, xv. (1883) p. 91; R. Wuttke, *Sächsische Volkskunde*<sup>2</sup> (Dresden, 1901), p. 369; Burne and Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 259. The reason assigned in the text was probably the original one in all cases, though it is not always the one alleged now.

the same principle sheep are shorn when the moon is waxing, because it is supposed that the wool will then be longest and most enduring.<sup>1</sup> Some negroes of the Gaboon think that taro and other vegetables never thrive if they are planted after full moon, but that they grow fast and strong if they are planted in the first quarter.<sup>2</sup> The Highlanders of Scotland used to expect better crops of grain by sowing their seed in the moon's increase.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand they thought that garden vegetables, such as onions and kail, run to seed if they are sown in the increase, but that they grow to pot-herbs if they are sown in the wane.<sup>4</sup> So Thomas Tusser advised the peasant to sow peas and beans in the wane of the moon "that they with the planet may rest and arise."<sup>5</sup> The Zulus welcome the first appearance of the new moon with beating of drums and other demonstrations of joy; but next day they abstain from all labour, "thinking that if anything is sown on those days they can never reap the benefit thereof."<sup>6</sup> But in this matter of sowing and planting a refined distinction is sometimes drawn by French, German, and Esthonian peasants; plants which bear fruit above ground are sown by them when the moon is waxing, but plants which are cultivated for the sake of their roots, such as potatoes and turnips, are sown when the moon is waning.<sup>7</sup> The reason for this distinction seems to be a vague idea that the waxing moon is coming up and the waning moon going down, and that

<sup>1</sup> F. S. Krauss, *op. cit.* p. 16; Montanus, *l.c.*; Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum*, i. 37 (see above, p. 363, note 4). However, the opposite rule is observed in the Upper Vosges, where it is thought that if the sheep are shorn at the new moon the quantity of wool will be much less than if they were shorn in the waning of the moon (L. F. Sauvé, *Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 5). In Normandy, also, wool is clipped during the waning of the moon; otherwise moths would get into it (J. Leconte, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 12).

<sup>2</sup> Father Lejeune, "Dans la forêt," *Missions Catholiques*, xxvii. (1895) p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> S. Johnson, *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (Baltimore, 1810),

p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Tusser, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, new edition (London, 1812), p. 107 (under February).

<sup>6</sup> Fairweather, in W. F. Owen's *Narrative of Voyages to explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia, and Madagascar*, ii. 396 *sq.*

<sup>7</sup> A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube*,<sup>2</sup> § 65, p. 58; J. Leconte, *loc. cit.*; E. Meier, *Deutsche Sagen, Sitten und Gebräuche aus Schwaben*, p. 511, § 422; Th. Siebs, "Das Saterland," *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, iii. (1893) p. 278; Holzmayer, *op. cit.* p. 47.



accordingly fruits which grow upwards should be sown in the former period, and fruits which grow downwards in the latter. Before beginning to plant their cacao the Pipiles of Central America exposed the finest seeds for four nights to the moonlight,<sup>1</sup> but whether they did so at the waxing or waning of the moon is not said.

Again, the waning of the moon has been commonly recommended both in ancient and modern times as the proper time for felling trees,<sup>2</sup> apparently because it was thought fit and natural that the operation of cutting down should be performed on earth at the time when the lunar orb was, so to say, being cut down in the sky. In France before the Revolution the forestry laws enjoined that trees should only be felled after the moon had passed the full; and in French bills announcing the sale of timber you may still read a notice that the wood was cut in the waning of the moon.<sup>3</sup> But sometimes the opposite rule is adopted, and equally forcible arguments are urged in its defence. Thus, when the Wabondei of Eastern Africa are about to build a house, they take care to cut the posts for it when the moon is on the increase; for they say that posts cut when the moon is wasting away would soon rot, whereas posts cut while the moon is waxing are very durable.<sup>4</sup> The same rule is observed for the same reason in some parts of Germany.<sup>5</sup> But the partisans of the

The phases of the moon in relation to the felling of timber.

<sup>1</sup> H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, ii. 719 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Cato, *De agri cultura*, 37. 4; Varro, *Rerum Rusticarum*, i. 37; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xvi. 190; Palladius, *De re rustica*, ii. 22, xii. 15; Plutarch, *Quæst. Conviv.* iii. 10. 3; Macrobius, *Saturn.* vii. 16; A. Wuttke, *l.c.*; Bavaria, *Landes- und Volkskunde des Königreichs Bayern*, iv. 2, p. 402; W. Kolbe, *Hessische Volks-Sitten und Gebräuche*, p. 58; L. F. Sauvé, *Folklore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 5; F. Chapiveau, *Folk-lors de la Beauce et du Perche*, i. 291 sq.; M. Martin, "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii. 630; J. G. Campbell, *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, p. 306; G. Amalfi, *Tradizioni ed Usi*

*nella penisola Sorrentina* (Palermo, 1890), p. 87; K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Brasilien*, p. 559. Compare F. de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud*, iii. 438. Pliny, while he says that the period from the twentieth to the thirtieth day of the lunar month was the season generally recommended, adds that the best time of all, according to universal opinion, was the interlunar day, between the old and the new moon, when the planet is invisible through being in conjunction with the sun.

<sup>3</sup> J. Leccœur, *Esquisses du Bocage Normand*, ii. 11 sq.

<sup>4</sup> O. Baumann, *Usambara und seine Nachbargebiete* (Berlin, 1891), p. 125.

<sup>5</sup> Montanus, *Die deutsche Volksfeste*,

The moon  
regarded  
as the  
source of  
moisture.

ordinarily received opinion have sometimes supported it by another reason, which introduces us to the second of those fallacious appearances by which men have been led to regard the moon as the cause of growth in plants. From observing rightly that dew falls most thickly on cloudless nights, they inferred wrongly that it was caused by the moon, a theory which the poet Alcman expressed in mythical form by saying that dew was a daughter of Zeus and the moon.<sup>1</sup> Hence the ancients concluded that the moon is the great source of moisture, as the sun is the great source of heat.<sup>2</sup> And as the humid power of the moon was assumed to be greater when the planet was waxing than when it was waning, they thought that timber cut during the increase of the luminary would be saturated with moisture, whereas timber cut in the wane would be comparatively dry. Hence we are told that in antiquity carpenters would reject timber felled when the moon was growing or full, because they believed that such timber teemed with sap;<sup>3</sup> and in the Vosges at the present day people allege that wood cut at the new moon does not dry.<sup>4</sup> In the Hebrides peasants give the same reason for cutting their peats when the moon is on the wane; "for they observe that if they are cut in the increase, they continue still moist and never burn clear, nor are they without smoke, but the contrary is daily observed of peats cut in the decrease."<sup>5</sup>

The moon,  
being  
viewed as  
the cause  
of vegetable  
growth, is  
naturally  
worshipped  
by agri-  
cultural  
peoples.

Thus misled by a double fallacy primitive philosophy comes to view the moon as the great cause of vegetable growth, first, because the planet seems itself to grow, and second, because it is supposed to be the source of dew and moisture. It is no wonder, therefore, that agricultural peoples should adore the planet which they believe to influence so profoundly the crops on which they depend for subsistence. Accordingly we find that in the hotter

*Volksbräuche und deutscher Volksglaube*, p. 128.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Quæst. Conviv.* iii. 10. 3; Macrobius, *Saturn.* vii. 16. See further, W. H. Roscher, *Über Selene und Verwandtes* (Leipzig, 1890), p. 49 197.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch and Macrobius, *ll. cc.*; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii. 223. 23. 1;

Aristotle, *Problemata*, xxiv. 14, p. 937 B, 3 sp. ed. I. Bekker (Berlin).

<sup>3</sup> Macrobius and Plutarch, *ll. cc.*

<sup>4</sup> L. F. Sauvé, *Folk-lore des Hautes-Vosges*, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> M. Martin, "Description of the Western Islands of Scotland," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, iii. 630.



regions of America, where maize is cultivated and manioc is the staple food, the moon was recognised as the principal object of worship, and plantations of manioc were assigned to it as a return for the service it rendered in the production of the crops. The worship of the moon in preference to the sun was general among the Caribs, and, perhaps, also among most of the other Indian tribes who cultivated maize in the tropical forests to the east of the Andes; and the same thing has been observed, under the same physical conditions, among the aborigines of the hottest region of Peru, the northern valleys of Yuncapata. Here the Indians of Pacasmayu and the neighbouring valleys revered the moon as their principal divinity. The "house of the moon" at Pacasmayu was the chief temple of the district; and the same sacrifices of maize-flour, of wine, and of children which were offered by the mountaineers of the Andes to the Sun-god, were offered by the lowlanders to the Moon-god in order that he might cause their crops to thrive.<sup>1</sup> In ancient Babylonia, where the population was essentially agricultural, the moon-god took precedence of the sun-god and was indeed reckoned his father.<sup>2</sup>

Hence it would be no matter for surprise if, after

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Payne, *History of the New World called America*, i. 495. In his remarks on the origin of moon-worship this learned and philosophical historian has indicated (*op. cit.* i. 493 *sqq.*) the true causes which lead primitive man to trace the growth of plants to the influence of the moon. Compare E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*,<sup>2</sup> i. 130. Mr. Payne suggests that the custom of naming the months after the principal natural products that ripen in them may have contributed to the same result. The custom is certainly very common among savages, as I hope to show elsewhere, but whether it has contributed to foster the fallacy in question seems doubtful.

The Indians of Brazil are said to pay more attention to the moon than to the sun, regarding it as a source both of good and ill (Spix und Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 379). The natives of Mori, a district of Central

Celebes, believe that the rice-spirit Omonga lives in the moon and eats up the rice in the granary if he is not treated with due respect. See A. C. Kruijt, "Eenige ethnografische Aanteekeningen omtrent de Toboengkoë en de Tomori," *Mededeelingen van wege het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*, xlv. (1900) p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> E. A. Budge, *Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, on recently-discovered inscriptions of this King*, p. 5 *sq.*; A. H. Sayce, *Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, p. 155; M. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 68 *sq.*, 75 *sq.*; L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology* (London, 1899), p. 17 *sq.* The Abts of Vancouver's Island, a tribe of fishers and hunters, view the moon as the husband of the sun and as a more powerful deity than her (G. M. Sproat, *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life*, p. 206).

Thus  
Osiris, the  
old corn-  
god, was  
afterwards  
identified  
with the  
moon.

worshipping the crops which furnished them with the means of subsistence, the ancient Egyptians should in later times have identified the spirit of the corn with the moon, which a false philosophy had taught them to regard as the ultimate cause of the growth of vegetation. In this way we can understand why in their most recent forms the myth and ritual of Osiris, the old god of trees and corn, should bear many traces of efforts made to bring them into a superficial conformity with the new doctrine of his lunar affinity.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE DOCTRINE OF LUNAR SYMPATHY

IN the preceding chapter some evidence was adduced of the sympathetic influence which the waxing or waning moon is popularly supposed to exert on growth, especially on the growth of vegetation. But the doctrine of lunar sympathy does not stop there; it is applied also to the affairs of man, and various customs and rules have been deduced from it which aim at the amelioration and even the indefinite extension of human life. To illustrate this application of the popular theory at length would be out of place here, but a few cases may be mentioned by way of specimen.

The natural fact on which all the customs in question seem to rest is the apparent monthly increase and decrease of the moon. From this observation men have inferred that all things simultaneously wax or wane in sympathy with it.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Mentras or Mantras of the Malay Peninsula have a tradition that in the beginning men did not die but grew thin with the waning of the moon, and waxed fat as she neared the full.<sup>2</sup> Of the Scottish Highlanders we are told that "the moon in her increase, full growth, and in her wane are, with them, the emblems of a rising, flourishing, and declining fortune. At the last period of her revolution they carefully avoid to engage in any business of importance; but the first and middle they seize with avidity, presaging

The doctrine of lunar sympathy.

Theory that all things wax or wane with the moon.

<sup>1</sup> This principle is clearly recognised and well illustrated by J. Grimm (*Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 594-596).

<sup>2</sup> D. F. A. Hervey, "The Mentra Traditions," *Journal of the Straits*

*Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 10 (Singapore, 1883), p. 190; W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), ii. 337.

the most auspicious issue to their undertakings."<sup>1</sup> Similarly in some parts of Germany, it is commonly believed that whatever is undertaken when the moon is on the increase succeeds well, and that the full moon brings everything to perfection; whereas business undertaken in the wane of the moon is doomed to failure.<sup>2</sup> This German belief has come down, as we might have anticipated, from barbaric times; for Tacitus tells us that the Germans considered the new or the full moon the most auspicious time for business;<sup>3</sup> and Caesar informs us that the Germans despaired of victory if they joined battle before the new moon.<sup>4</sup> The Spartans seem to have been of the same opinion, for it was a rule with them never to march out to war except when the moon was full. The rule prevented them from sending troops in time to fight the Persians at Marathon,<sup>5</sup> and but for Athenian valour this paltry superstition might have turned the scale of battle and decided the destiny of Greece, if not of Europe, for centuries. The Athenians themselves paid dear for a similar scruple: an eclipse of the moon cost them the loss of a gallant fleet and army before Syracuse, and practically sealed the fate of Athens, for she never recovered from the blow.<sup>6</sup> So heavy is the sacrifice which superstition demands of its votaries. In this respect the Greeks were on a level with the negroes of the Sudan, among whom, if a march has been decided upon during the last quarter of the moon, the departure is always deferred until the first day of the new moon. No chief would dare to undertake an expedition and lead out his warriors before the appearance of the crescent. Merchants and private persons observe the same rule on their journeys.<sup>7</sup> In like manner the Mandingoes of Senegambia pay great attention to the changes of the moon, and think it very unlucky to begin a journey or any other work of consequence in the last quarter.<sup>8</sup>

It is especially the appearance of the new moon, with

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. Grant (parish minister of Kirkmichael), in Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, xii. 457.

<sup>2</sup> Kuhn und Schwartz, *Norddeutsche Sagen, Märchen und Gebräuche*, p. 457, § 419.

<sup>3</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Caesar, *De bello Gallico*, i. 50.

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, vi. 106; Lucian, *De astrologia*, 25; Pausanias, i. 28. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Thucydides, vii. 50.

<sup>7</sup> Le capitaine Binger, *Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée* (Paris, 1892), ii. 116.

<sup>8</sup> Mungo Park, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (London, 1807), pp. 406 sq.



its promise of growth and increase, which is greeted with ceremonies intended to renew and invigorate, by means of sympathetic magic, the life of man. Observers, ignorant of savage superstition, have commonly misinterpreted such customs as worship or adoration paid to the moon. In point of fact the ceremonies of new moon are probably in many cases rather magical than religious. The Indians of the Ucayali River in Peru hail the appearance of the new moon with great joy. They make long speeches to her, accompanied with vehement gesticulations, imploring her protection and begging that she will be so good as to invigorate their bodies.<sup>1</sup> On the day when the new moon first appeared, it was a custom with the Indians of San Juan Capistrano, in California, to call together all the young men for the purpose of its celebration. "*Correr la luna!*" shouted one of the old men, "Come, my boys, the moon! the moon!" Immediately the young men began to run about in a disorderly fashion as if they were distracted, while the old men danced in a circle, saying, "As the moon dieth, and cometh to life again, so we also having to die will again live."<sup>2</sup> An old traveller tells us that at the appearance of every new moon the negroes of the Congo clapped their hands and cried out, sometimes falling on their knees, "So may I renew my life as thou art renewed." But if the sky happened to be clouded, they did nothing, alleging that the planet had lost its virtue.<sup>3</sup> A somewhat similar custom prevails among the Ovambo of South-western Africa. On the first moonlight night of the new moon, young and old, their bodies smeared with white earth, probably in imitation of the planet's silvery light, dance to the moon and address to it wishes which they feel sure will be granted.<sup>4</sup> We may conjecture that among these wishes is a prayer for a renewal of life. When a Masai sees the new moon he throws a twig or stone at it with his left hand, and says, "Give me long life," or "Give me strength"; and when a pregnant

The ceremonies observed at new moon are often magical rather than religious, being intended to renew sympathetically the life of man.

<sup>1</sup> W. Smythe and F. Lowe, *Narrative of a Journey from Lima to Para* (London, 1836), p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> Father G. Boscana, "Chinigichinich," in *Life in California, by an American* [A. Robinson] (New York,

1846), pp. 298 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Merolla, "Voyage to Congo," in Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels*, xvi. 273.

<sup>4</sup> H. Schinz, *Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, p. 319.

woman sees the new moon she milks some milk into a small gourd, which she covers with green grass. Then she pours the milk away in the direction of the moon and says, "Moon, give me my child safely."<sup>1</sup> Among the Wagogo of German East Africa, at sight of the new moon some people break a stick in pieces, spit on the pieces, and throw them towards the moon, saying, "Let all illness go to the west, where the sun sets."<sup>2</sup> The Esthonians think that all the misfortunes which might befall a man in the course of a month may be forestalled and shifted to the moon, if a man will only say to the new moon, "Good morrow, new moon. I must grow young, you must grow old. My eyes must grow bright, yours must grow dark. I must grow light as a bird, you must grow heavy as iron."<sup>3</sup>

Attempts  
to eat or  
drink the  
moonlight.

In India people attempt to absorb the vital influence of the moon by drinking water in which the luminary is reflected. Thus the Mohammedans of Oude fill a silver basin with water and hold it so that the orb of the full moon is mirrored in it. The person to be benefited must look steadfastly at the moon in the basin, then shut his eyes and drink the water at one gulp. Doctors recommend the draught as a remedy for nervous disorders and palpitation of the heart. Somewhat similar customs prevail among the Hindoos of Northern India. At the full moon of the month of Kuar (September-October) people lay out food on the house-tops, and when it has absorbed the rays of the moon they distribute it among their relations, who are supposed to lengthen their life by eating of the food which has thus been saturated with moonshine. Patients are often made to look at the moon reflected in melted butter, oil, or milk as a cure for leprosy and the like diseases.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> H. Cole, "Notes on the Wagogo of German East Africa," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxii. (1902) p. 330.

<sup>3</sup> J. G. Kohl, *Die deutsch-russischen Ostseeprovinzen*, ii. 279. Compare Boecler-Kreutzwald, *Der Ehsten abergläubische Gebräuche, Weisen und Gewohnheiten*, pp. 142 sq.; J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 595, note 1.

The power of regeneration ascribed to the moon in these customs is sometimes attributed to the sun. Thus it is said that the Chiriguano Indians of South-eastern Bolivia often address the sun as follows: "Thou art born and appearest every day, only to revive always young. Cause that it may be so with me." See A. Thouar, *Explorations dans l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1891), p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and*



Naturally enough the genial influence of moonshine is often supposed to be particularly beneficial to children; for will not the waxing moon help them to wax in strength and stature? The Guarayos Indians, who inhabit the gloomy tropical forests of Eastern Bolivia, lift up their children in the air at new moon in order that they may grow.<sup>1</sup> Among the Apinagos Indians, on the Tocantins River in Brazil, the French traveller Castelnau witnessed a remarkable dance by moonlight. The Indians danced in two long ranks which faced each other, the women on one side, the men on the other. Between the two ranks of dancers blazed a great fire. The men were painted in brilliant colours, and for the most part wore white or red skull-caps made of maize-flour and resin. Their dancing was very monotonous and consisted of a jerky movement of the body, while the dancer advanced first one leg and then the other. This dance they accompanied with a melancholy song, striking the ground with their weapons. Opposite them the women, naked and unpainted, stood in a single rank, their bodies bent slightly forward, their knees pressed together, their arms swinging in measured time, now forward, now backward, so as to join hands. A remarkable figure in the dance was a personage painted scarlet all over, who held in his hand a rattle composed of a gourd full of pebbles. From time to time he leaped across the great fire which burned between the men and the women. Then he would run rapidly in front of the women, stopping now and then before one or other and performing a series of strange gambols, while he shook his rattle violently. Sometimes he would sink with one knee to the ground, and then suddenly throw himself backward. Altogether the agility and endurance which he displayed were remarkable. This dance lasted for hours. When a woman was tired out she withdrew, and her place was taken by another; but the same men danced the monotonous dance all night. Towards midnight the moon attained the zenith and flooded the scene with her bright rays. A change now took place in the dance. A long line of men and

The supposed influence of moonlight on children.

Infants presented to the moon by the Apinagos Indians of Brazil.

*Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), i. 14 sq.

*que Méridionale*, iii. 1<sup>re</sup> Partie (Paris and Strasburg, 1844), p. 24.

<sup>1</sup> A. d'Orbigny, *Voyage dans l'Amérique*.

women advanced to the fire between the ranks of the dancers. Each of them held one end of a hammock in which lay a new-born infant, whose squalls could be heard. These babes were now to be presented by their parents to the moon. On reaching the end of the line each couple swung the hammock, accompanying the movement by a chant, which all the Indians sang in chorus. The song seemed to consist of three words, repeated over and over again. Soon a shrill voice was heard, and a hideous old hag, like a skeleton, appeared with her arms raised above her head. She went round and round the assembly several times, then disappeared in silence. While she was present, the scarlet dancer with the rattle bounded about more furiously than ever, stopping only for a moment while he passed in front of the line of women. His body was contracted and bent towards them, and described an undulatory movement like that of a worm writhing. He shook his rattle violently, as if he would fain kindle in the women the fire which burned in himself. Then rising abruptly he would resume his wild career. During this time the loud voice of an orator was heard from the village repeating a curious name without cessation. Then the speaker approached slowly, carrying on his back some gorgeous bunches of brilliant feathers and under his arm a stone axe. Behind him walked a young woman bearing an infant in a loose girdle at her waist; the child was wrapped in a mat, which protected it against the chill night air. The couple paced slowly for a minute or two, and then vanished without speaking a word. At the same moment the curious name which the orator had shouted was taken up by the whole assembly and repeated by them again and again. This scene in its turn lasted a long time, but ceased suddenly with the setting of the moon. The French traveller who witnessed it fell asleep, and when he awoke all was calm once more: there was nothing to recall the infernal dances of the night.<sup>1</sup>

In explanation of these dances Castelnau merely observes that the Apinagos, like many other South American Indians,

<sup>1</sup> F. de Castelnau, *Expédition dans les parties centrales de l'Amérique du Sud* (Paris, 1850-1851), ii. 31-34.



pay a superstitious respect to the moon. We may suppose that the ceremonious presentation of the infants to the moon was intended to ensure their life and growth. The names solemnly chanted by the whole assembly were probably those which the parents publicly bestowed on their children. As to the scarlet dancer who leaped across the fire, we may conjecture that he personated the moon, and that his strange antics in front of the women were designed to impart to them the fertilising virtue of the luminary, and perhaps to facilitate their delivery.

The presentation of infants to the moon is probably intended to make them grow.

Among the Baganda of Central Africa there is general rejoicing when the new moon appears, and no work is done for seven days. When the crescent is first visible at evening, mothers take out their babies and hold them at arms' length, saying, "I want my child to keep in health till the moon wanes." At the same time a ceremony is performed which may be intended to ensure the king's life and health throughout the ensuing month. It is a custom with the Baganda to preserve the king's placenta with great care during his life. A special minister has charge of the precious object, and every new moon, at evening, he carries it in state, wrapped in bark cloths, to the king, who takes it into his hands, examines it, and returns it to the minister. The keeper of the placenta then goes back with it to the house and sets it in the doorway, where it remains all night. Next morning it is taken from its wrappings and again placed in the doorway until the evening, when it is once more swathed in bark cloths and restored to its usual place.<sup>1</sup> Apparently the placenta is conceived as a vital portion, a sort of external soul, of the king; and the attentions bestowed on it at the new moon may be supposed to refresh and invigorate it, thereby refreshing and invigorating the king's life.

Baganda ceremonies at new moon.

The Armenians appear to think that the moon exercises a baleful influence on little children. To avert that influence a mother will show the moon to her child and say, "Thine uncle, thine uncle." For the same purpose the father and mother will mount to the roof of the house at

Baleful influence supposed to be exercised by the moon on children.

<sup>1</sup> J. Roscoe, "Further Notes on the Manners and Customs of the Baganda," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxii. (1902) pp. 63, 76.

new moon on a Wednesday or Friday. The father then puts the child on a shovel and gives it to the mother, saying, "If it is thine, take it to thee. But if it is mine, rear it and give it to me back." The mother then takes the child and the shovel, and returns them to the father in like manner.<sup>1</sup> A similar opinion as to the noxious influence of moonshine on children was apparently held by the ancient Greeks; for Greek nurses took great care never to show their infants to the moon.<sup>2</sup> Some Brazilian Indians in like manner guard babies against the moon, believing that it would make them ill. Immediately after delivery mothers will hide themselves and their infants in the thickest parts of the forest in order that the moonlight may not fall on them.<sup>3</sup> It would be easy to understand why the waning moon should be deemed injurious to children; they might be supposed to peak and pine with its dwindling light. Thus in Angus it is thought that if a child be weaned during the waning of the moon, it will decay all the time that the moon continues to wane.<sup>4</sup> But it is less easy to see why the same deleterious influence on children should be ascribed to moonlight in general.

There are many other ways in which people have sought to turn lunar sympathy to practical account. Clearly the increase of the moon is the time to increase your goods, and the decrease of the moon is the time to diminish your ills. Acting on this imaginary law of nature many persons in Europe show their money to the new moon or turn it in their pockets at that season, in the belief that the money will grow with the growth of the planet; sometimes, by way of additional precaution, they spit on the coin at the same time.<sup>5</sup> "Both Christians and Moslems in Syria turn their silver money in their pockets at the new moon for luck; and two persons meeting under the new moon will each

Use of the  
moon to  
increase  
money or  
decrease  
sickness.

<sup>1</sup> M. Abeghian, *Der armenische Volksglaube* (Leipsic, 1899), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Questiones Conviviales*, iv. 10. 3. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Spix und Martius, *Reise in Brasilien*, i. 381, iii. 1186.

<sup>4</sup> J. Jamieson, *Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, new edition (Paisley, 1880), iii. 300 (s.v. "Mone").

<sup>5</sup> F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 260; P. Drochslar, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien*, ii. (Leipsic, 1906) p. 131; W. Henderson, *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England*, p. 114; Burne and Jackson, *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 257; W. Gregor, *Folk-lore of the North-East of Scotland*, p. 151.



take out a silver coin and embrace, saying, 'May you begin and end; and may it be a good month to us.'"<sup>1</sup> Conversely the waning of the moon is the most natural time to get rid of bodily ailments. In Brittany they think that warts vary with the phases of the moon, growing as it waxes and vanishing away as it wanes.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, they say in Germany that if you would rid yourself of warts you should treat them when the moon is on the decrease.<sup>3</sup> And a German cure for toothache, earache, headache, and so forth, is to look towards the waning moon and say, "As the moon decreases, so may my pains decrease also."<sup>4</sup> However, some Germans reverse the rule. They say, for example, that if you are afflicted with a wen, you should face the waxing moon, lay your finger on the wen, and say thrice, "What I see waxes; what I touch, let it vanish away." After each of these two sentences you should cross yourself thrice. Then go home without speaking to any one, and repeat three paternosters behind the kitchen door.<sup>5</sup> The Huzuls of the Carpathians recommend a somewhat similar, and no doubt equally efficacious, cure for waterbrash. They say that at new moon the patient should run thrice round the house and then say to the moon, "Moon, moon, where wast thou?" "Behind the mountain." "What hast thou eaten there?" "Horse flesh." "Why hast thou brought me nothing?" "Because I forgot." "May the waterbrash forget to burn me!"<sup>6</sup> Thus a curative virtue appears to be attributed by some people to the waning and by others to the waxing moon. There is perhaps just as much, or as little, to be said for the one attribution as for the other.

<sup>1</sup> C. R. Conder, *Heth and Moab* (London, 1883), p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> P. Sébillot, *Traditions et Superstitions de la Haute-Bretagne*, ii. 355.

<sup>3</sup> A. Kuhn, *Märkische Sagen und Märchen*, p. 387, § 93.

<sup>4</sup> *Die gestrigelte Rockenphilosophie*

(Chemnitz, 1759), p. 447.

<sup>5</sup> F. Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii. 302. Compare J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 596.

<sup>6</sup> R. F. Kaindl, "Zauberglaube bei den Huzulen," *Globus*, lxxvi. (1899) p. 256.

## CHAPTER X

### THE KING AS OSIRIS

Osiris personated by the king of Egypt.

IN the foregoing discussion we found reason to believe that the Semitic Adonis and the Phrygian Attis were at one time personated in the flesh by kings, princes, or priests who played the part of the god for a time and then either died a violent death in the divine character or had to redeem their life in one way or another, whether by performing a make-believe sacrifice at some expense of pain and danger to themselves, or by delegating the duty to a substitute.<sup>1</sup> Further, we conjectured that in Egypt the part of Osiris may have been played by the king himself.<sup>2</sup> It remains to adduce some positive evidence of this personation.

The Sed festival celebrated in Egypt at intervals of thirty years.

A great festival called the Sed was celebrated by the Egyptians with much solemnity at intervals of thirty years. Various portions of the ritual are represented on the ancient monuments of Hieraconpolis and Abydos and in the oldest decorated temple of Egypt known to us, that of Usirniri at Busiris, which dates from the fifth dynasty. It appears that the ceremonies were as old as the Egyptian civilisation, and that they continued to be observed till the end of the Roman period.<sup>3</sup> The reason for holding them at intervals of thirty

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 13 *sqq.*, 42 *sqq.*, 84, 88, 137 *sq.*, 139 *sqq.*, 143 *sqq.*, 146 *sqq.*, 239 *sqq.*, 242 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 331 *sq.*, 335.

<sup>3</sup> A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté Pharaonique*, pp. 235-238. The festival is discussed at length by Mr. Moret (*op. cit.* pp. 235-273). See further R. Lepsius, *Die Chronologie der Ägypter*, i. 161-165;

Miss M. A. Murray, *The Osirion at Abydos*, pp. 32-34; W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* (London, 1906), pp. 176-185. In interpreting the festival I follow Professor Flinders Petrie. That the festival occurred, theoretically at least, at intervals of thirty years, appears to be unquestionable; for in the Greek text of the Rosetta Stone Ptolemy V. is called "lord of periods of thirty years," and though the



years is uncertain, but we can hardly doubt that the period was determined by astronomical considerations. According to one view, it was based on the observation of Saturn's period of revolution round the sun, which is, roughly speaking, thirty years, or, more exactly, twenty-nine years and one hundred and seventy-four days.<sup>1</sup> According to another view, the thirty years' period had reference to Sirius, the star of Isis. We have seen that on account of the vague character of the old Egyptian year the heliacal rising of Sirius shifted its place gradually through every month of the calendar.<sup>2</sup> In one hundred and twenty years the star thus passed through one whole month of thirty days. To speak more precisely, it rose on the first of the month during the first four years of the period: it rose on the second of the month in the second four years, on the third of the month in the third four years; and so on successively, till in the last four years of the hundred and twenty years it rose on the last day of the month. As the Egyptians watched the annual summer rising of the star with attention and associated it with the most popular of their goddesses, it would be natural that its passage from one month to another, at intervals of one hundred and twenty years, should be the occasion of a great festival, and that the long period of one hundred and twenty years should be divided into four minor periods of thirty years respectively, each celebrated by a minor festival.<sup>3</sup> If this theory of the Sed festivals is correct, we should expect to find that every fourth celebration was distinguished from the rest by a higher degree of solemnity, since it marked the completion of a twelfth part of the star's journey through the twelve months. Now it appears that in point of fact every fourth Sed festival was marked off from its fellows by the adjective *tep* or "chief," and that these "chief" celebrations fell as a

corresponding part of the hieroglyphic text is lost, the demotic version of the words is "master of the years of the Sed festival." See R. Lepsius, *op. cit.* pp. 161 sq.; W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, No. 90, line 2 (vol. i, p. 142); A. Moret, *op. cit.* 260. Mr. Moret attempts to give to the Greek word

(*επιακοστιαστής*) a vague sense which it cannot bear.

<sup>1</sup> This was Letronne's theory (R. Lepsius, *op. cit.* p. 163).

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 286 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> This was in substance the theory of Biot (R. Lepsius, *loc. cit.*), and it is the view of Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie (*Researches in Sinai*, pp. 176 sqq.).

rule in the years when Sirius rose on the first of the month.<sup>1</sup> These facts confirm the view that the Sed festival was closely connected with the star Sirius, and through it with Isis.

Intention  
of the Sed  
festival to  
renew the  
king's life.

However, we are here concerned rather with the meaning and the rites of the festival than with the reasons for holding it once every thirty years. The intention of the festival seems to have been to procure for the king a new lease of life, a renovation of his divine energies, a rejuvenescence. In the inscriptions of Abydos we read, after an account of the rites, the following address to the king: "Thou dost recommence thy renewal, thou art granted to flourish again like the infant god Moon, thou dost grow young again, and that from season to season, like Nun at the beginning of time, thou art born again in renewing the Sed festivals. All life comes to thy nostril, and thou art king of the whole earth for ever."<sup>2</sup> In short, on these occasions it appears to have been supposed that the king was in a manner born again.

The king  
identified  
with the  
dead Osiris  
at the Sed  
festival.

But how was the new birth effected? Apparently the essence of the rites consisted in identifying the king with Osiris; for just as Osiris had died and risen again from the dead, so the king might be thought to die and to live again with the god whom he personated. The ceremony would thus be for the king a death as well as a rebirth. Accordingly in pictures of the Sed festival on the monuments we see the king posing as the dead Osiris. He sits in a shrine like a god, holding in his hands the crook and flail of Osiris: he is wrapped in tight bandages like the mummified Osiris; indeed, there is nothing but his name to prove that he is not Osiris himself. This enthronement of the king in the attitude of the dead god seems to have been the principal event of the festival.<sup>3</sup> Further, the queen and the king's daughters figured prominently in the ceremonies.<sup>4</sup> A discharge of arrows formed part of the rites;<sup>5</sup> and in some

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique*, pp. 255 sq.

<sup>3</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> A. Moret, *op. cit.* p. 240; Miss M. A. Murray, *The Osireion at Abydos*, pp. 33 sq., with the slip inserted at p. 33; W. M. Flinders Petrie, *op. cit.* p. 184.

<sup>5</sup> A. Moret, *op. cit.* p. 242.



sculptures at Carnac the queen is portrayed shooting arrows towards the four quarters of the world, while the king does the same with rings.<sup>1</sup> The oldest illustration of the festival is on the mace of Narmer, which is believed to date from 5500 B.C. Here we see the king seated as Osiris in a shrine at the top of nine steps. Beside the shrine stand fan-bearers, and in front of it is a figure in a palanquin, which, according to an inscription in another representation of the scene, appears to be the royal child. An enclosure of curtains hung on poles surrounds the dancing ground, where three men are performing a sacred dance. A procession of standards is depicted beside the enclosure; it is headed by the standard of the jackal-god Up-uat, the "opener of ways" for the dead.<sup>2</sup> Similarly on a seal of King Zer, which is referred to 5300 B.C., the king appears as Osiris with the standard of the jackal-god before him. In front of him, too, is the ostrich feather on which "the dead king was supposed to ascend into heaven. Here, then, the king, identified with Osiris, king of the dead, has before him the jackal-god, who leads the dead, and the ostrich feather, which symbolizes his reception into the sky."<sup>3</sup> There are even grounds for thinking that in order to complete the mimic death of the king at the Sed festival an effigy of him clad in the costume of Osiris was solemnly buried in a cenotaph.<sup>4</sup>

According to Professor Flinders Petrie, "the conclusion may be drawn thus. In the savage age of prehistoric times, the Egyptians, like many other African and Indian peoples, killed their priest-king at stated intervals, in order that the ruler should, with unimpaired life and health, be enabled to maintain the kingdom in its highest condition. The royal daughters were present in order that they might be married to his successor. The jackal-god went before him, to open the way to the unseen world; and the ostrich feather received and bore away the king's soul in the breeze

Suggested  
explanation  
of the Sed  
festival.

<sup>1</sup> Miss M. A. Murray, *op. cit.*, slip inserted at p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *l.c.*

<sup>4</sup> J. Capart, "Bulletin critique des religions de l'Égypte," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, liii. (1906) pp. 332-334. I have to thank Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie for calling my attention to this passage.

that blew it out of sight. This was the celebration of the 'end,' the *sed* feast. The king thus became the dead king, patron of all those who had died in his reign, who were his subjects here and hereafter. He was thus one with Osiris, the king of the dead. This fierce custom became changed, as in other lands, by appointing a deputy king to die in his stead; which idea survived in the Coptic Abu Nerūs, with his tall crown of Upper Egypt, false beard, and sceptre. After the death of the deputy, the real king renewed his life and reign. Henceforward this became the greatest of the royal festivals, the apotheosis of the king during his life, after which he became Osiris upon earth and the patron of the dead in the underworld."<sup>1</sup>

Osiris  
personated  
by the  
king of  
Egypt.

Whether this interpretation of the Sed festival be accepted in all its details or not, one thing seems quite certain: on these solemn occasions the god Osiris was personated by the king of Egypt himself. That is the point with which we are here chiefly concerned.

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, p. 185. As to the Coptic mock-king see C. B. Klünzinger, *Bilder aus Oberägypten, der Wüste und dem*

*Roten Meer*, pp. 180 sq.; *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 30. For examples of sacrifices offered to prolong the lives of kings see below, pp. 402 sqq.



## CHAPTER XI

### MOTHER-KIN AND MOTHER GODDESSES

#### § 1. *Dying Gods and Mourning Goddesses*

WE have now concluded our inquiry into the nature and worship of the three Oriental deities Adonis, Attis, and Osiris. The essential similarity of their character justifies us in treating of them together. All three apparently embodied the powers of fertility in general and of vegetation in particular. All three were believed to have died and risen again from the dead; and the divine death and resurrection of all three were dramatically represented at annual festivals, which their worshippers celebrated with alternate transports of sorrow and joy, of weeping and exultation. The natural phenomena thus mythically conceived and mythically represented were the great changes of the seasons, especially the most striking and impressive of all, the decay and revival of vegetation; and the intention of the sacred dramas was to refresh and strengthen, by sympathetic magic, the failing energies of nature, in order that the trees should bear fruit, that the corn should ripen, that men and animals should reproduce their kinds.

But the three gods did not stand by themselves. The mythical personification of nature, of which all three were products, required that each of them should be coupled with a goddess, and in each case it appears that originally the goddess was a more powerful and important personage than the god. At all events it is always the god rather than the goddess who comes to a sad end, and whose death is annually mourned. Thus, whereas Osiris was slain by Typhon, his divine spouse Isis survived and brought him to

Essential  
similarity  
of Adonis,  
Attis, and  
Osiris.

The superiority of the  
goddesses associated  
with  
Adonis,  
Attis, and  
Osiris  
points to a  
system of  
mother-  
kin.

life again. This feature of the myth seems to indicate that in the beginning Isis was, what Astarte and Cybele always continued to be, the stronger divinity of the pair. Now the superiority thus assigned to the goddess over the god is most naturally explained as the result of a social system in which maternity counted for more than paternity, descent being traced and property handed down through women rather than through men. At all events this explanation cannot be deemed intrinsically improbable if we can show that the supposed cause has produced the very same effect among existing peoples, about whose institutions we possess accurate information. This I will now endeavour to do.

### § 2. *Influence of Mother-Kin on Religion*

Mother-kin  
and father-  
kin.

The social system which traces descent and transmits property through the mother alone may be called mother-kin, while the converse system which traces descent and transmits property through the father alone may be called father-kin.<sup>1</sup> A good example of the influence which mother-kin may exert on religion is furnished by the Khasis of Assam, whose customs and beliefs have lately been carefully recorded by a British officer specially charged with the study of the native races of the province.<sup>2</sup> Like the ancient Egyptians and the Semites of Syria and Mesopotamia, the Khasis live in settled villages and maintain themselves chiefly by the cultivation of the ground; yet "their social organization presents one of the most perfect examples still surviving of matriarchal institutions, carried out with a logic and thoroughness which, to those accustomed to regard the status and authority of the father as the foundation of society, are exceedingly remarkable. Not only is the mother the head and source, and only bond of union, of the family: in the most primitive part of the hills, the Synteng country, she is the only owner of real property, and through her alone is

The  
Khasis of  
Assam  
have  
mother-  
kin, and  
among  
them  
goddesses  
predominate  
over  
gods and  
priestesses  
over  
priests.

<sup>1</sup> I have adopted the terms "mother-kin" and "father-kin" as less ambiguous than the terms "mother-right" and "father-right," which I formerly employed in the same sense.

<sup>2</sup> *The Khasis*, by Major P. R. T. Curdon, I.A., Deputy Commissioner Eastern Bengal and Assam Commission, and Superintendent of Ethnography in Assam (London, 1907).



inheritance transmitted.<sup>1</sup> The father has no kinship with his children, who belong to their mother's clan; what he earns goes to his own matriarchal stock, and at his death his bones are deposited in the cromlech of his mother's kin. In Jowai he neither lives nor eats in his wife's house, but visits it only after dark. In the veneration of ancestors, which is the foundation of the tribal piety, the primal ancestress (*Ka Iāwbei*) and her brother are the only persons regarded. The flat memorial stones set up to perpetuate the memory of the dead are called after the woman who represents the clan (*māw kynthēi*), and the standing stones ranged behind them are dedicated to the male kinsmen on the mother's side. In harmony with this scheme of ancestor worship, the other spirits to whom propitiation is offered are mainly female, though here male personages also figure. The powers of sickness and death are all female, and these are the most frequently worshipped. The two protectors of the household are goddesses, though with them is also revered the first father of the clan, *U Thāwlang*. Priestesses assist at all sacrifices, and the male officiants are only their deputies; in one important state, Khyrim, the High Priestess and actual head of the State is a woman, who combines in her person sacerdotal and regal functions."<sup>2</sup> Thus amongst the Khasis of the present day the

<sup>1</sup> "The Khasi saying is, '*long jaid na ka kynthēi*' (from the woman sprang the clan). The Khasis, when reckoning descent, count from the mother only; they speak of a family of brothers and sisters, who are the great grandchildren of one great grandmother, as *shī ēpoh*, which, being literally translated, is one womb, i.e. the issue of one womb. The man is nobody" (P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis*, p. 82). "All land acquired by inheritance must follow the Khasi law of entail, by which property descends from the mother to the youngest daughter, and again from the latter to her youngest daughter. Ancestral landed property must therefore be always owned by women. The male members of the family may cultivate such lands, but they must carry all the produce to the house of their mother, who will divide it amongst the

members of the family" (*op. cit.* p. 88). "The rule amongst the Khasis is that the youngest daughter 'holds' the religion, '*ka bat ka niam*.' Her house is called, '*ka iing seng*,' and it is here that the members of the family assemble to witness her performance of the family ceremonies. Hers is, therefore, the largest share of the family property, because it is she whose duty it is to perform the family ceremonies, and propitiate the family ancestors" (*op. cit.* p. 83).

<sup>2</sup> Sir C. J. Lyall, in his Introduction to *The Khasis*, by Major P. R. T. Gurdon, pp. xxiii. *sq.* Sir C. J. Lyall himself lived for many years amongst the Khasis and studied their customs. For the details of the evidence on which his summary is based see especially pp. 63 *sqq.*, 68 *sq.*, 76, 82 *sqq.*, 88, 106 *sqq.*, 109 *sqq.*, 112 *sq.*, 121, 150, of

superiority of the goddess to the god, and especially of the revered ancestress to the revered ancestor, is based directly on the social system which traces descent and transmits property through women only. It is not unreasonable therefore to suppose that in Western Asia the superiority of the Mother Goddess to the Father God originated in the same archaic system of mother-kin.

Again, the Pelew Islanders have mother-kin, and the deities of their clans are all goddesses.

Another instance of the same cause producing the same effect may be drawn from the institutions of the Pelew Islanders, which have been described by an accurate observer long resident in the islands. These people, who form a branch of the Micronesian stock, are divided into a series of exogamous families or clans with descent in the female line,<sup>1</sup> so that, as usually happens under such a system, a man's heirs are not his own children but the children of his sister or of his maternal aunt.<sup>2</sup> Every family or clan traces its descent from a woman, the common mother of the whole kin,<sup>3</sup> and accordingly the members of the clan worship a goddess, not a god.<sup>4</sup> These families or clans, with female descent and a worship of goddesses rather than of gods, are grouped together in villages, each village comprising about a score of clans and forming with its lands a petty

Major Gurdon's book. As to the Khasi priestesses, see above, p. 41 *sq.*

<sup>1</sup> J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer* (Berlin, 1885), pp. 35 *sq.* The writer calls one of these kins indifferently a *Familie* or a *Stamme*.

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Kubary, "Die Totenbestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *Original-Mitteilungen aus der Ethnologischen Abtheilung der königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, I. (Berlin, 1885) p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde* (Berlin, 1888), I. 20-22. The writer says that the family or clan gods of the Pelew Islanders are too many to be enumerated, but he gives as a specimen a list of the family deities of one particular district (Ngarupesang). Having done so he observes that they are all god-

desses, and he adds that "this is explained by the importance of the woman for the clan. The deity of the mother is inherited, that of the father is not" (*op. cit.* p. 22). As he says nothing to indicate that the family deities of this particular district are exceptional, we may infer, as I have done, that the deities of all the families or clans are goddesses. Yet a few pages previously (pp. 16 *sq.*) he tells us that a village which contains twenty families will have at least forty deities, if not more, "for some houses may have two *kalids* [deities], and every house has also a goddess." This seems to imply that the families or clans have gods as well as goddesses. The seeming discrepancy is perhaps to be explained by another statement of the writer that "in the family only the *kalids* [deities] of the women count" ("*sich geltend machen*," J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 38).



independent state.<sup>1</sup> Every such village-state has its special deity or deities, generally a god and a goddess. But these political deities of the villages are said to be directly derived from the domestic deities of the families or clans,<sup>2</sup> from which it seems to follow that among these people gods are historically later than goddesses and have been developed out of them.<sup>3</sup> The late origin of the gods as compared with the goddesses is further indicated by the nature of their names.<sup>4</sup>

This preference for goddesses over gods in the clans of the Pelew Islanders has been explained, no doubt rightly, by the high importance of women in the social system of the people.<sup>5</sup> For the existence of the clan depends entirely on the life of the women, not at all upon the life of the men. If the women survive, it is no matter though every man of the clan should perish; for the women will, as usual, marry men of another clan, and their offspring will inherit their mother's clan, thereby prolonging its existence. Whereas if the women of the clan all die out, the clan necessarily becomes extinct, even though every man of it should survive; for the men must, as usual, marry women of another clan, and their offspring will inherit their mothers' clan, not the clan of their fathers, which accordingly, with the death of the fathers, is wiped out from the community. Hence in these islands women bear the titles of *Adhalál a pelú*, "Mothers of the Land," and *Adhalál a blay*, "Mothers of the Clan," and they are said to enjoy complete equality with the men in every respect.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in one passage our principal authority speaks of "the predominance of feminine influence in the social condition of the people," and asserts without qualification that the women are politically and socially superior to the men.<sup>7</sup> The eldest women of the clan exercise, he tells

This preference for goddesses is to be explained by the importance of women in the social system of the Pelew Islanders.

<sup>1</sup> J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 33 sq., 63; *id.*, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde*, i. 16.

<sup>2</sup> J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde*, i. 15-17, 22, 25-27.

<sup>3</sup> From the passages cited in the preceding note it appears that this was

Kubary's opinion, though he has not stated it explicitly.

<sup>4</sup> J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde*, i. 28 sq.

<sup>5</sup> J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 38. See also above, p. 386, note 4.

<sup>6</sup> J. Kubary, *l.c.*

<sup>7</sup> See below, p. 388.

us, the most decisive influence on the conduct of its affairs, and the headman does nothing without full consultation with them, a consultation which in the great houses extends to affairs of state and foreign politics.<sup>1</sup> Nay, these elder women are even esteemed and treated as equal to the deities in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup>

The high position of women in the Pelew Islands has also an industrial basis; for they alone cultivate the taro, the staple food of the people.

But the high position which women thus take in Pelew society is not a result of mother-kin only. It has an industrial as well as a kinship basis. For the Pelew Islanders subsist mainly on the produce of their taro fields, and the cultivation of this, their staple food, is the business of the women alone. "This cardinal branch of Pelew agriculture, which is of paramount importance for the subsistence of the people, is left entirely in the hands of the women. This fact may have contributed materially to the predominance of female influence in the social condition of the people. The women do not merely bestow life on the people, they also do that which is most essential for the preservation of life, and therefore they are called *Adhaldl a pelis*, the 'Mothers of the Land,' and are politically and socially superior to men. Only their offspring enjoy the privilege of membership of the state (the children of the men are, strictly speaking, strangers destitute of rights), and the oldest women are esteemed and treated as equal to deities in their lifetime, and they exercise a decisive influence on the conduct of affairs of state. No chief would venture to come to a decision without first consulting with the *Adhaldl a blay*, the 'Mothers of the Family.' From this point of view it is impossible to regard the assignment of the taro cultivation to women as a consequence of their subordinate position in society: the women themselves do not so regard it. The richest woman of the village looks with pride on her taro patch, and although she has female followers enough to allow her merely to superintend the work without taking part in it, she nevertheless prefers to lay aside her fine apron and to betake herself to the deep mire, clad in a small apron that hardly hides her nakedness, with a little mat on her back to protect her from the

<sup>1</sup> J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> See the statement of Kubary quoted in the next paragraph.



burning heat of the sun, and with a shade of banana leaves for her eyes. There, dripping with sweat in the burning sun and coated with mud to the hips and over the elbows, she toils to set the younger women a good example. Moreover, as in every other occupation, the *kaliths*, the gods, must also be invoked, and who could be better fitted for the discharge of so important a duty than the Mother of the House?"<sup>1</sup> It seems clear that in any agricultural people who, like the Pelew Islanders, retain mother-kin and depute the labours of husbandry to women, the conception of a great Mother Goddess, the divine source of all fertility, might easily originate. Perhaps the same social and industrial conditions may have combined to develop the great Mother Goddesses of Western Asia and Egypt.

But in the Pelew Islands women have yet another road to power. For some of them are reputed to be the wives of gods, and act as their oracular mouthpieces. Such prophetesses are called *Amlakeys*, and no surprise is felt when one of them is brought to bed. Her child passes for the offspring of the god, her divine husband, and goes about with his hair hanging loose in token of his superhuman parentage. It is thought that no mortal man would dare to intrigue with one of these human wives of a god, since the jealous deity would surely visit the rash culprit with deadly sickness and a lingering decline.<sup>2</sup> But in these islands men as well as women are often possessed by a deity and speak in his name. Under his inspiration they mimic, often with great histrionic skill, the particular appearance and manner which are believed to be characteristic of the indwelling divinity. These inspired men (*Korongs*) usually enjoy great consideration and exert a powerful influence over the whole community. They always acquire wealth in the exercise of their profession. When they are not themselves chiefs, they are treated as chiefs or even preferred to them. In not a few places the deity whom they personate is also the political head of the land; and in that case his inspired priest, however humble his origin,

Both men and women in the Pelew Islands attain to power by posing as the inspired mouthpieces of the gods.

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels* (Leiden, 1895), p. 159. On the importance of the iaro or sweet potato as the staple food of the people,

see *ib.* pp. 156 sq.

<sup>2</sup> J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde*, i. 34.

ranks as a spiritual king and rules over all the chiefs. Indeed we are told that, with the physical and intellectual decay of the race, the power of the priests is more and more in the ascendant and threatens, if unchecked, to develop before long into an absolute theocracy which will swallow up every other form of government.<sup>1</sup>

Parallel between the Pelew Islands of to-day and the religious and social state of Western Asia and Egypt in antiquity.

Thus the present, or at least the recent, state of society and religion in the Pelew Islands presents some interesting parallels to the social and religious condition of Western Asia and Egypt in early days, if the conclusions reached in this volume are correct. In both regions we see a society based on mother-kin developing a religion in which goddesses of the clan originally occupied the foremost place, though in later times, as the clans coalesced into states, the old goddesses have been rivalled and to some extent supplanted by the new male gods of the enlarged pantheon. But in the religion of the Pelew Islanders, as in that of the Khasis and the ancient Egyptians, the balance of power has never wholly shifted from the female to the male line, because society has never passed from mother-kin to father-kin. And in the Pelew Islands as in the ancient East we see the tide of political power running strongly in the direction of theocracy, the people resigning the conduct of affairs into the hands of men who claimed to rule them in the name of the gods. In the Pelew Islands such men might have developed into divine kings like those of Babylon and Egypt, if the natural course of evolution had not been cut short by the intervention of Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Mother-kin does not imply that the government is in the hands of women.

The evidence of the Khasis and the Pelew Islanders, two peoples very remote and very different from each other, suffices to prove that the influence which mother-kin may exert on religion is real and deep. But in order to dissipate misapprehensions, which appear to be rife on this subject, it may be well to remind or inform the

<sup>1</sup> J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Völkern und Menschenkunde*, i. 30-35. The author wrote thus in the year 1883, and his account of the Pelew religion was published in 1888. Compare his work *Die sozialen Einrich-*

*tungen der Pelauer*, p. 81. Great changes have probably taken place in the islands since Kubary wrote.

<sup>2</sup> For some other parallels between the state of society and religion in these two regions, see Appendix IV. at the end of the volume.



reader that the ancient and widespread custom of tracing descent and inheriting property through the mother alone does not by any means imply that the government of the tribes which observe the custom is in the hands of women; in short, it should always be borne in mind that mother-kin does not mean mother-rule. On the contrary, the practice of mother-kin prevails most extensively amongst the lowest savages, with whom woman, instead of being the ruler of man, is always his drudge and often little better than his slave. Indeed, so far is the system from implying any social superiority of women that it probably took its rise from what we should regard as their deepest degradation, to wit, from a state of society in which the relations of the sexes were so loose and vague that children could not be fathered on any particular man.

When we pass from the purely savage state to that higher plane of culture in which the accumulation of property, and especially of landed property, has become a powerful instrument of social and political influence, we naturally find that wherever the ancient preference for the female line of descent has been retained, it tends to increase the importance and enhance the dignity of woman; and her aggrandisement is most marked in princely families, where she either herself holds royal authority as well as private property, or at least transmits them both to her consort or her children. But this social advance of women has never been carried so far as to place men as a whole in a position of political subordination to them. Even where the system of mother-kin in regard to descent and property has prevailed most fully, the actual government has generally, if not invariably, remained in the hands of men. Exceptions have no doubt occurred; women have occasionally arisen who by sheer force of character have swayed for a time the destinies of their people. But such exceptions are rare and their effects transitory; they do not affect the truth of the general rule that human society has been governed in the past and, human nature remaining the same, is likely to be governed in the future, mainly by masculine force and masculine intelligence.

The inheritance of property, especially of landed property, through the mother certainly tends to raise the social importance of women, but this tendency is never carried so far as to subordinate men politically to women.

To this rule the Khasis, with their elaborate system of

Thus while the Khasis and Pelew Islanders have mother-kin, they are governed by men, not by women.

mother-kin, form no exception. For among them, while landed property is both transmitted through women and held by women alone, political power is transmitted indeed through women, but is held by men; in other words, the Khasi tribes are, with a single exception, governed by kings, not by queens. And even in the one tribe, which is nominally ruled by women, the real power is delegated by the reigning queen or High Priestess to her son, her nephew, or a more distant male relation. In all the other tribes the kingship may be held by a woman only on the failure of all male heirs in the female line.<sup>1</sup> So far is mother-kin from implying mother-rule. A Khasi king inherits power in right of his mother, but he exercises it in his own. Similarly the Pelew Islanders, in spite of their system of mother-kin, are governed by chiefs, not by chieftainesses. It is true that there are chieftainesses, and that they indirectly exercise much influence; but their direct authority is limited to the affairs of women, especially to the administration of the women's clubs or associations, which answer to the clubs or associations of the men.<sup>2</sup> And, to take another example, the Melanesians, like the Khasis and the Pelew Islanders, have the system of mother-kin, being similarly divided into exogamous clans with descent in the female line; "but it must be understood that the mother is in no way the head of the family. The house of

<sup>1</sup> Major P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis*, pp. 66-71. The rule of succession is as follows. A *Siem*, or king, "is succeeded by the eldest of his uterine brothers; failing such brothers, by the eldest of his sisters' sons; failing such nephews, by the eldest of the sons of his sisters' daughters; failing such grand-nephews, by the eldest of the sons of his mother's sisters; and, failing such first cousins, by the eldest of his male cousins on the female side, other than first cousins, those nearest in degree of relationship having prior claim. If there were no heirs male, as above, he would be succeeded by the eldest of his uterine sisters; in the absence of such sisters, by the eldest of his sister's daughters; failing such nieces, by the eldest of the

daughters of his sisters' daughters; failing such nieces, by the eldest of the daughters of his sisters' daughters; failing such grand-nieces, by the eldest of the daughters of his mother's sisters; and failing such first cousins, by the eldest of his female cousins on the female side, other than first cousins, those nearest in degree of relationship having prior claim. A female *Siem* would be succeeded by her eldest son, and so on" (*op. cit.* p. 71). The rule illustrates the logical precision with which the system of mother-kin is carried out by these people even when the intention is actually to exclude women from power.

<sup>2</sup> J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrichtungen der Pileuer*, pp. 35, 39 sq., 73-83. See also above, pp. 387 sq.



the family is the father's, the garden is his, the rule and government are his."<sup>1</sup>

We may safely assume that the practice has been the same among all the many peoples who have retained the ancient system of mother-kin under a monarchical constitution. In Africa, for example, the chieftainship or kingship often descends in the female line, but it is men, not women, who inherit it.<sup>2</sup> The theory of a gynaeccocracy is in truth a dream of visionaries and pedants. And equally chimerical is the idea that the predominance of goddesses under a system of mother-kin like that of the Khasis is a creation of the female mind. If women ever created gods, they would be more likely to give them masculine than feminine features. In point of fact the great religious ideals which have permanently impressed themselves on the world seem always to have been a product of the male imagination. Men make gods and women worship them. The combination of ancestor-worship with mother-kin furnishes a simple and sufficient explanation of the superiority of goddesses over gods in a state of society where these conditions prevail. Men naturally assign the first place in their devotions to the ancestress from whom they trace their descent. We need not resort to a fantastic hypothesis of the preponderance of the feminine fancy in order to account for the facts.

The theory that under a system of mother-kin the women rule the men and set up goddesses for them to worship is indeed so improbable in itself, and so contrary to experience, that it scarcely deserves the serious attention which it appears to have received.<sup>3</sup> But when we have

The theory of a gynaeccocracy and of the predominance of the female imagination in religion is an idle dream.

But mother-kin is a solid fact, which can hardly have failed to modify the religion of the peoples who practise it.

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> See A. H. Post, *Afrikanische Jurisprudenz*, i. 140 sq. Captain W. Gill reports that the Sa-Mu, a Man-Tru tribe in Southern China numbering some three and a half millions, is always ruled by a queen (*The River of Golden Sand*, i. 365). But Capt. Gill was not nearer to the tribe than a six days' journey; and even if his report is correct we may suppose that the real power is exercised by men, just as it is in the solitary Khasi tribe which is nominally

governed by a woman.

<sup>3</sup> The theory, or at all events the latter part of it, has been carefully examined by Dr. L. R. Farnell; and if, as I apprehend, he rejects it, I agree with him. See his article "Sociological Hypotheses concerning the position of Women in Ancient Religion," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, vii. (1904) pp. 70-94; his *Cults of the Greek States*, iii. (1907) pp. 169 sqq.; and *The Hibbert Journal*, April 1907, p. 690. But I differ from him, it seems, in thinking that mother-kin is favourable to the growth of mother goddesses.

brushed aside these cobwebs, as we must do, we are still left face to face with the solid fact of the wide prevalence of mother-kin, that is, of a social system which traces descent and transmits property through women and not through men. That a social system so widely spread and so deeply rooted should have affected the religion of the peoples who practise it, may reasonably be inferred, especially when we remember that in primitive communities the social relations of the gods commonly reflect the social relations of their worshippers. How the system of mother-kin may mould religious ideas and customs, creating goddesses and assigning at least a nominal superiority to priestesses over priests, is shown with perfect lucidity by the example of the Khasis, and hardly less clearly by the example of the Pelew Islanders. It cannot therefore be rash to hold that what the system has certainly done for these peoples, it may well have done for many more. But unfortunately through lack of documentary evidence we are seldom able to trace its influence so clearly.

### § 3. *Mother-Kin and Mother Goddesses in the Ancient East*

While the combination of mother-kin in society with a preference for goddesses in religion is to be found as a matter of fact among the Khasis and Pelew Islanders of to-day, the former prevalence of mother-kin in the lands where the great goddesses Astarte and Cybele were worshipped is a matter of inference only. In later times father-kin had certainly displaced mother-kin among the Semitic worshippers of Astarte, and probably the same change had taken place among the Phrygian worshippers of Cybele. Yet the older custom lingered in Lycia down to the historical period;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Lycians traced their descent through women, not through men; and among them it was the daughters, not the sons, who inherited the family property. See Herodotus, i. 174; Nicolaus Damascenus, in Stobaeus, *Florilegium*, xlv. 41 (*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, iii. 461); Plutarch, *De mulierum virtutibus*, 9. An ancient his-

torian even asserts that the Lycians were ruled by women (*ἡ βασιλεύς γυναικεποῦνται*, Heraclides Ponticus, Frag. 15, in *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. C. Müller, ii. 217). Dr. L. Messerschmidt seems to think that the Lycians were Hittites (*The Hittites*, p. 20). Inscriptions recently found at Dalhandos, in Isauria, seem to prove that it was not unusual there



and we may conjecture that in former times it was widely spread through Asia Minor. The secluded situation and rugged mountains of Lycia favoured the survival of a native language and of native institutions long after these had disappeared from the wide plains and fertile valleys which lay on the highroads of war and commerce. Lycia was to Asia Minor what the highlands of Wales and of Scotland have been to Britain, the last entrenchments where the old race stood at bay. And even among the Semites of antiquity, though father-kin finally prevailed in matters of descent and property, traces of an older system of mother-kin, with its looser sexual relations, appear to have long survived in the sphere of religion. At all events one of the most learned and acute of Semitic scholars adduced what he regarded as evidence sufficient to prove "that in old Arabian religion gods and goddesses often occurred in pairs, the goddess being the greater, so that the god cannot be her Baal, that the goddess is often a mother without being a wife, and the god her son, and that the progress of things was towards changing goddesses into gods or lowering them beneath the male deity."<sup>1</sup>

In Egypt the archaic system of mother-kin, with its preference for women over men in matters of property and inheritance, lasted down to Roman times, and it was traditionally based on the example of Isis, who had avenged her husband's murder and had continued to reign after his decease, conferring benefits on mankind. "For these reasons," says Diodorus Siculus, "it was appointed that the queen should enjoy greater power and honour than the king, and that among private people the wife should rule over her husband, in the marriage contract the husband agreeing to obey his wife in all things."<sup>2</sup> A corollary of the superior

Mother-  
kin of  
ancient  
Egypt.

to trace descent through the mother even in the third or the fourth century after Christ. See Sir W. M. Ramsay, "The Permanence of Religion at Holy Places in the East," *The Expositor*, November 1906, p. 475.

<sup>1</sup> W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*<sup>2</sup> (London, 1903), p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, i. 27. 1 *sq.*

In spite of this express testimony to the existence of a true gynæcocracy in ancient Egypt, I am of opinion that the alleged superiority of the queen to the king and of the wife to her husband must have been to a great extent only nominal. Certainly we know that it was the king and not the queen who really governed the country; and we can hardly doubt that in like manner

position thus conceded to women in Egypt was that the obligation of maintaining parents in their old age rested on the daughters, not on the sons, of the family.<sup>1</sup>

Marriages  
of brothers  
and sisters  
in ancient  
Egypt.

The same legal superiority of women over men accounts for the most remarkable feature in the social system of the ancient Egyptians, to wit, the marriage of full brothers with full sisters. That marriage, which to us seems strange and unnatural, was by no means a whim of the reigning Ptolemies; on the contrary, these Macedonian conquerors appear, with characteristic prudence, to have borrowed the custom from their Egyptian predecessors for the express purpose of conciliating native prejudice. In the eyes of the Egyptians "marriage between brother and sister was the best of marriages, and it acquired an ineffable degree of sanctity when the brother and sister who contracted it were themselves born of a brother and sister, who had in their turn also sprung from a union of the same sort."<sup>2</sup> Nor did the principle apply only to gods and kings. The common people acted on it in their daily life. They regarded marriages between brothers and sisters as the most natural and reasonable of all.<sup>3</sup> The evidence of legal documents, including marriage contracts, tends to prove that such unions were the rule, not the exception, in ancient Egypt, and that they continued to form the majority of marriages long after the Romans had obtained a firm footing in the country. As we cannot suppose that Roman influence was used to promote a custom which must have been abhorrent to Roman instincts, we may safely assume that the proportion of brother and sister marriages in Egypt had been still greater in the days when the country was free.<sup>4</sup>

it was for the most part the husband and not the wife who really ruled the house, though unquestionably in regard to property the law seems to have granted important rights to women which it denied to men. On the position of women in ancient Egypt see especially the able article of Miss Rachel Evelyn White (Mrs. Wedd), "Women in Ptolemaic Egypt," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) pp. 238-256.

<sup>2</sup> Maspero, quoted by Miss R. E. White, *op. cit.* p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> J. Nietzold, *Die Ehe in Ägypten zur Ptolemäisch-römischen Zeit* (Leipzig, 1903), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> A. Erman, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, pp. 221 sq.; U. Wilcken, "Arsinoitische Steuerprofessionen aus dem Jahre 189 n. Chr.," *Sitzungsberichte der könig. Preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1883, p. 903; J. Nietzold, *Die Ehe in Ägypten zur ptolemäisch-römischen Zeit*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, ii. 35.



It would doubtless be a mistake to treat these marriages as a relic of savagery, as a survival of a tribal communism which knew no bar to the intercourse of the sexes. For such a theory would not explain why union with a sister was not only allowed, but preferred to all others. The true motive of that preference was most probably the wish of brothers to obtain for their own use the family property, which belonged of right to their sisters, and which otherwise they would have seen in the enjoyment of strangers, the husbands of their sisters. This is the system which in Ceylon is known as *beena* marriage. Under it the daughter, not the son, is the heir. She stays at home, and her husband comes and lives with her in the house; but her brother goes away and dwells in his wife's home, inheriting nothing from his parents.<sup>1</sup> Such a system could not fail in time to prove irksome. Men would be loth to quit the old home, resign the ancestral property to a stranger, and go out to seek their fortune empty-handed in the world. The remedy was obvious. A man had nothing to do but to marry his sister himself instead of handing her over to another. Having done so he stayed at home and enjoyed the family estate in virtue of his marriage with the heiress. This simple and perfectly effective expedient for keeping the property in the family most probably explains the custom of brother and sister marriage in Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

Such marriages were based on a wish to keep the property in the family.

<sup>1</sup> J. F. McLennan, *Studies in Ancient History* (London, 1886), pp. 101 sqq. Among the Kocchs of North-eastern India "the property of the husband is made over to the wife; when she dies it goes to her daughters, and when he marries he lives with his wife's mother" (R. G. Latham, *Descriptive Ethnology*, i. 96).

<sup>2</sup> This is in substance the explanation which Miss Rachel Evelyn White (Mrs. Wedd) gives of the Egyptian custom. See her paper, "Women in Ptolemaic Egypt," *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xviii. (1898) p. 265. Similarly Mr. J. Nietzold observes that "economical considerations, especially in the case of great landowners, may often have been the occasion of marriages with sisters, the intention being in this way

to avoid a division of the property" (*Die Ehe in Ägypten*, p. 13). The same explanation of the custom has been given by Prof. W. Ridgeway. See his "Supplices of Aeschylus," in *Prælections delivered before the Senate of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1906), pp. 154 sq. I understand from Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie that the theory has been a commonplace with Egyptologists for many years. McLennan explained the marriage of brothers and sisters in royal families as an expedient for shifting the succession from the female to the male line; but he did not extend the theory so as to explain similar marriages among common people in Egypt, perhaps because he was not aware of the facts. See J. F. McLennan, *The*

Thus the mythical marriage of Osiris with his sister Isis reflected a real social custom.

The passing of the old world in Egypt.

Thus the union of Osiris with his sister Isis was not a freak of the story-teller's fancy: it reflected a social custom which was itself based on practical considerations of the most solid kind. When we reflect that this practice of mother-kin as opposed to father-kin survived down to the latest times of antiquity, not in an obscure and barbarous tribe, but in a nation whose immemorial civilisation was its glory and the wonder of the world, we may without being extravagant suppose that a similar practice formerly prevailed in Syria and Phrygia, and that it accounts for the superiority of the goddess over the god in the divine partnerships of Adonis and Astarte, of Attis and Cybele. But the ancient system both of society and of religion had undergone far more change in these countries than in Egypt, where to the last the main outlines of the old structure could be traced in the national institutions to which the Egyptians clung with a passionate, a fanatical devotion. Mother-kin, the divinity of kings and queens, a sense of the original connection of the gods with nature—these things outlived the Persian, the Macedonian, the Roman conquest, and only perished under the more powerful solvent of Christianity. But the old order did not vanish at once with the official establishment of the new religion. In the age of Constantine the Greeks of Egypt still attributed the rise of the Nile to Serapis, the later form of Osiris, alleging that the inundation could not take place if the standard cubit, which was used to measure it, were not deposited according to custom in the temple of the god. The emperor ordered the cubit to be transferred to a church; and next year, to the general surprise, the river rose just as usual.<sup>1</sup> Even at a later time Athanasius himself had to confess with sorrow and indignation that under his own eyes the Egyptians still annually mourned the death of Osiris.<sup>2</sup> The end came with the destruction of the great Serapeum at Alexandria,

*Patriarchal Theory*, edited and completed by D. McLennan (London, 1885), p. 95.

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. 18 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, lxxii. 121). The learned Valesius, in his note on this passage, informs us that

the cubit was again transferred by the Emperor Julian to the Serapeum, where it was left in peace till the destruction of that temple.

<sup>2</sup> Athanasius, *Oratio contra Gentes*, 10 (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, xxv. 24).



the last stronghold of the heathen in Egypt. It perished in a furious and bloody sedition, in which Christians and pagans seem to have vied with each other in mutual atrocities. After its fall the temples were levelled with the ground or converted into churches, and the images of the old gods went to the melting-pot to be converted into base uses for the rabble of Alexandria.<sup>1</sup>

The singular tenacity with which the Egyptian people maintained their traditional beliefs and customs for thousands of years sprang no doubt from the stubborn conservatism of the national character. Yet that conservatism was itself in great measure an effect of geographical and climatic conditions and of the ways of life which they favoured. Surrounded on every side by deserts or almost harbourless seas, the Egyptians occupied a position of great natural strength which for long ages together protected them from invasion and allowed their native habits to set and harden, undisturbed by the subversive influence of foreign conquest. The wonderful regularity of nature in Egypt also conduced to a corresponding stability in the minds of the people. Year in, year out, the immutable succession of the seasons brought with it the same unvarying round of agricultural toil. What the fathers had done, the sons did in the same manner at the same season, and so it went on from generation to generation. This monotonous routine is common indeed to all purely agricultural communities, and everywhere tends to beget in the husbandman a settled phlegmatic habit of mind very different from the mobility, the alertness, the pliability of character which the hazards and uncertainties of commerce and the sea foster in the merchant and the sailor. The saturnine temperament of the farmer is as naturally averse to change as the more mercurial spirit of the trader and the seaman is predisposed to it. But the stereotyping of ideas and of customs was carried further in Egypt than in most lands devoted to husbandry by reason of the greater uniformity of the Egyptian seasons and the more complete isolation of the country.

Egyptian conservatism partly an effect of natural conditions and habits of life.

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, v. 16 sq. (Migne's *Patrologia Græca*, lxxvii. 604 sq.); Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, vii. 15 (Migne's *Patro-*

*logia Græca*, lxxvii. 1152 sq.) These events took place under the Emperor Theodosius in the year 391 A.D.

The original type of Osiris better preserved than those of Adonis and Attis.

The general effect of these causes was to create a type of national character which presented many points of resemblance to that of the Chinese. In both we see the same inflexible strength of will, the same astonishing industry, the same strange blend of humanity and savagery, the same obstinate adherence to tradition, the same pride of race and of ancient civilisation, the same contempt for foreigners as for upstarts and barbarians, the same patient outward submission to an alien rule combined with an unshakeable inward devotion to native ideals. It was this conservative temper of the people, bred in great measure of the physical nature of their land, which, so to say, embalmed the corn-god Osiris long after the corresponding figures of Adonis and Attis had suffered decay. For while Egypt enjoyed profound repose, the tides of war and conquest, of traffic and commerce, had for centuries rolled over Western Asia, the native home of Adonis and Attis; and if the shock of nationalities in this great meeting-ground of East and West was favourable to the rise of new faiths and new moralities, it was in the same measure unfavourable to the preservation of the old.



## APPENDICES

### I

#### MOLOCH THE KING

I CANNOT leave the evidence for the sacred character of Jewish kings<sup>1</sup> without mentioning a suggestion which was made to me by my friend and teacher the Rev. Professor R. H. Kennett. He thinks that Moloch, to whom first-born children were burnt by their parents in the valley of Hinnom, outside the walls of Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> may have been originally the human king regarded as an incarnate deity. Certainly the name of Moloch, or rather Molech (for so it is always written in the Massoretic text<sup>3</sup>), is merely a slightly disguised form of *melech*, the ordinary Hebrew word for "king," the scribes

Moloch perhaps the human king regarded as an incarnate deity.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 15 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 40 sqq.; G. F. Moore, in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, s.v. "Molech." The phrase translated "make pass through the fire to Molech" (2 Kings xxiii. 10) means properly, Professor Kennett tells me, "make to pass over by means of fire to Molech," where the verb has the sense of "make over to," "dedicate," "devote," as appears from its use in Exodus xiii. 12 ("set apart," English Version) and Ezekiel xx. 26. That the children were not made simply to pass through the fire, but were burned in it, is shown by a comparison of 2 Kings xvi. 3, xxii. 10, Jeremiah xxxii. 35, with 2 Chronicles xxviii. 3, Jeremiah vii. 31, xix. 5. As to the use of the verb מָלַךְ in the sense of "dedicate," "devote," see *Encyclopædia Biblica*, iii. 3184; Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 718. "The testimony of both the prophets and the laws is

abundant and unambiguous that the victims were slain and burnt as a holocaust" (G. F. Moore, in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, iii. 3184). Similarly Professor J. Skinner translates the phrase in 2 Kings xvi. 3 by "dedicated his son by fire," and remarks that the expression, "whatever its primary sense may be, undoubtedly denoted actual burning" (commentary on Kings in *The Century Bible*). The practice would seem to have been very ancient at Jerusalem, for tradition placed the attempted burnt-sacrifice of Isaac by his father Abraham on Mount Moriah, which was no other than Mount Zion, the site of the king's palace and of the temple of Jehovah. See Genesis xxii. 1-18; 2 Chronicles iii. 1; J. Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie*, pp. 45, 233; *Encyclopædia Biblica*, s.v. "Moriah."

<sup>3</sup> Leviticus xviii. 21, xx. 2-5; 1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jeremiah xxxii. 35.

having apparently given the dreadful word the vowels of *bosheth*, "shameful thing."<sup>1</sup> But it seems clear that in historical times the Jews who offered these sacrifices identified Molech, not with the human king, but with Jehovah, though the prophets protested against the custom as an outrage on the divine majesty.<sup>2</sup>

The sacrifices to Moloch may have been intended to prolong the king's life. Vicarious sacrifices for a king or queen in Sweden, Persia, and Madagascar,

If, however, these sacrifices were originally offered to or in behalf of the human king, it is possible that they were intended to prolong his life and strengthen his hands for the performance of those magical functions which he was expected to discharge for the good of his people. The old kings of Sweden answered with their heads for the fertility of the ground,<sup>3</sup> and we read that one of them, Aun or On by name, sacrificed nine of his sons to Odin at Upsala in order that his own life might be spared. After the sacrifice of his second son he received from the god an oracle that he should live as long as he gave him one of his sons every tenth year. When he had thus sacrificed seven sons, the ruthless father still lived, but was so feeble that he could no longer walk and had to be carried in a chair. Then he offered up his eighth son and lived ten years more, bedridden. After that he sacrificed his ninth son, and lived ten years more, drinking out of a horn like a weaned child. He now wished to sacrifice his last remaining son to Odin, but the Swedes would not let him, so he died and was buried in a mound at Upsala.<sup>4</sup> In this Swedish tradition the king's children seem to have been looked upon as substitutes offered to the god in place of their father, and apparently this was also the current explanation of the slaughter of the first-born in the later times of Israel.<sup>5</sup> On that view the sacrifices were vicarious, and therefore purely religious, being intended to propitiate a stern and exacting deity. Similarly we read that when Amestris, wife of Xerxes, was grown old, she sacrificed on her behalf twice seven noble children to the earth god by burying them alive.<sup>6</sup> If the story is true—and it rests on the authority of Herodotus, a nearly contemporary witness—we

<sup>1</sup> W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> p. 372, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> "It is plain, from various passages of the prophets, that the sacrifices of children among the Jews before the captivity, which are commonly known as sacrifices to Moloch, were regarded by the worshippers as oblations to Jehovah, under the title of king" (W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*,<sup>2</sup> p. 372, referring to Jeremiah vii. 31. xix. 5. xxxii. 35; Ezekiel xxiii. 39; Micah vi. 7). The same view is taken by Prof. G. F. Moore, in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, i.e. "Molech," vol. iii. 3187 sq.

<sup>3</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> i. 159.

<sup>4</sup> "Ynglinga Saga," 29, in *The Heimskringla or Chronicle of the Kings of Norway*, translated by S. Laing (London, 1844), i. 239 sq.; H. M. Chadwick, *The Cult of Odin* (London, 1899), pp. 4. 27. Similarly in Peru, when a person of note was sick, he would sometimes sacrifice his son to the idol in order that his own life might be spared. See Herrera, *The General History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America* (translated by Stevens), iv. 347 sq.

<sup>5</sup> Micah vi. 6-8.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, vii. 114; Plutarch, *De superstitione*, 13.



may surmise that the aged queen acted thus with an eye to the future rather than to the past; she hoped that the grim god of the nether-world would accept the young victims in her stead, and let her live for many years. The same idea of vicarious suffering comes out in a tradition told of a certain Hova king of Madagascar, who bore the sonorous name of Andriamasinavalona. When he had grown sickly and feeble, the oracle was consulted as to the best way of restoring him to health. "The following result was the consequence of the directions of the oracle. A speech was first delivered to the people, offering great honours and rewards to the family of any individual who would freely offer himself to be sacrificed, in order to the king's recovery. The people shuddered at the idea, and ran away in different directions. One man, however, presented himself for the purpose, and his offer was accepted. The sacrificer girded up his loins, sharpened his knife, and bound the victim. After which, he was laid down with his head towards the east, upon a mat spread for the purpose, according to the custom with animals on such occasions, when the priest appeared to proceed with all solemnity in slaughtering the victim by cutting his throat. A quantity of red liquid, however, which had been prepared from a native dye, was spilled in the ceremony; and, to the amazement of those who looked on, blood seemed to be flowing all around. The man, as might be supposed, was unhurt; but the king rewarded him and his descendants with the perpetual privilege of exemption from capital punishment for any violation of the laws. The descendants of the man to this day form a particular class, called *Tay maty manota*, which may be translated, 'Not dead, though transgressing.' Instances frequently occur, of individuals of this class appropriating bullocks, rice, and other things belonging to the sovereign, as if they were their own, and escaping merely with a reprimand, while a common person would have to suffer death, or be reduced to slavery."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes, however, the practices intended to prolong the king's life seem to rest on a theory of nutrition rather than of substitution; in other words, the life of the victims, instead of being offered vicariously to a god, is apparently supposed to pass directly into the body of the sacrificer, thus refreshing his failing strength and prolonging his existence. So regarded, the custom is magical rather than religious in character, since the desired effect is thought to follow directly without the intervention of a deity. At all events, it can be shown that sacrifices of this sort have been offered to prolong the life of kings in other parts of the world. Thus in regard to some of the negroes who inhabit the delta of the Niger we read that: "A custom which formerly was practised by the Ibani, and is still prevalent among all the interior tribes, consists in prolonging

Other sacrifices for prolonging the king's life appear to be magical rather than religious.

Custom in the Niger delta.

<sup>1</sup> W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar*, i. 344 sq.

the life of a king or ancestral representative by the daily, or possibly weekly, sacrifice of a chicken and egg. Every morning, as soon as the patriarch has arisen from his bed, the sacrificial articles are procured either by his mother, head wife, or eldest daughter, and given to the priest, who receives them on the open space in front of the house. When this has been reported to the patriarch, he comes outside and, sitting down, joins in the ceremony. Taking the chicken in his hand, the priest first of all touches the patriarch's face with it, and afterwards passes it over the whole of his body. He then cuts its throat and allows the blood to drop on the ground. Mixing the blood and the earth into a paste, he rubs it on the old man's forehead and breast, and this is not to be washed off under any circumstances until the evening. The chicken and the egg, also a piece of white cloth, are now tied on to a stick, which, if a stream is in the near vicinity, is planted in the ground at the water-side. During the carriage of these articles to the place in question, all the wives and many members of the household accompany the priest, invoking the deity as they go to prolong their father's life. This is done in the firm conviction that through the sacrifice of such chicken his life will be accordingly prolonged."<sup>1</sup>

The ceremony thus described is, like so many other rites, a combination of magic and religion; for whereas the prayers to the god are religious, the passing of the victim over the king's body and the smearing of him with its blood are magical, being plainly intended to convey to him directly, without the mediation of any deity, the life of the fowl. In the following instances the practices for prolonging the king's life seem to be purely magical. Among the Zulus, at one of the annual feasts of first-fruits, a bull is killed by a particular regiment. In slaughtering the beast they may not use spears or sticks, but must break its neck or choke it with their bare hands. "It is then burned, and the strength of the bull is supposed to enter into the king, thereby prolonging his life."<sup>2</sup> Again, in an early Portuguese historian we read of a Caffre king of East Africa that "it is related of this Monomotapa that he has a house where he commands bodies of men who have died at the hands of the law to be hung up, and where thus hanging all the humidity of their bodies falls into vessels placed underneath, and when all has dropped from them and they shrink and dry up he commands them to be taken down and buried, and with the fat and moisture in the vases they say he makes ointments with which he anoints

Customs  
observed  
by the  
Zulus and  
Caffres to  
prolong the  
king's life.

<sup>1</sup> Major A. G. Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes* (London, 1906), p. 457.

<sup>2</sup> D. Leslie, *Among the Zulus and Amatungus* (Edinburgh, 1875), p. 91. This sacrifice may be the one described by J. Shooter, *The Kafirs of Natal*, p.

26. The reason for not stabbing the animal is perhaps a wish not to lose any of the blood, but to convey its life intact to the king. The same reason would explain the same rule which the Baganda observed in killing a human victim for the same purpose (see below).



himself in order to enjoy long life—which is his belief—and also to be proof against receiving harm from sorcerers.”<sup>1</sup>

The Baganda of Central Africa used to sacrifice a man for the purpose of prolonging the king's life. The mode of sacrifice was as follows. When a king of Uganda wished to live for ever, he went to a place in Busiro, where a feast was given by the chiefs. At the feast the Mamba clan was especially held in honour, and during the festivities a member of that clan was secretly chosen by his fellows, caught by them, and beaten to death with their fists; no stick or other weapon might be used by the men appointed to do the deed. After death the victim's body was flayed and the skin made into a special whip, which was kept in a house within the royal enclosure. Once a year, at the feast given by the king to all his subjects in memory of his accession to the throne, the whip was taken out by a man, who hid it under his garment and passed through the crowd of merry-makers. As he passed he would flick a man here and there with the whip, and it was believed that the person so struck would be childless and might die unless he made an offering of ninety cowrie shells to the man who had struck him. Naturally he hastened to procure the shells and take them to the striker, who on receiving them struck the man with his hand, thus removing the curse which the blow of the whip had inflicted. After the ceremony of the feast in Busiro, with its strange sacrifice, the king of Uganda was supposed to live for ever, but from that day he was never allowed to see his mother again. The precise meaning of this Baganda custom is obscure, but we may conjecture that the life or virility of every man struck with the whip of human skin was supposed to be conveyed in some way to the king, who thus annually recruited his vital, and especially his reproductive, energies on the anniversary of his accession. If I am right in this conjecture, the slaughter of the human victim in this case belongs to the nutritive rather than to the vicarious type of sacrifice, from which it will follow that it is magical rather than religious in character.

The same thing may perhaps be said of the wholesale massacres which used to be perpetrated when a king of Uganda was ill. At these times the priests informed the royal patient that persons marked by a certain physical peculiarity, such as a cast of the eye, a particular gait, or a distinctive colouring, must be put to death. Accordingly the king sent out his catchpoles, who waylaid such persons in the roads and dragged them to the royal enclosure, where they were kept until the tale of victims prescribed by the priest was complete. Before they were led away to one of the eight places of execution, which were regularly appointed for this purpose in different

Customs  
observed  
by the  
Baganda  
to prolong  
the king's  
life.

<sup>1</sup> Dos Santos, *Eastern Ethiopia*, bk. II. chap. 16 (G. M'Call Theal's *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, vii. 289).

parts of the kingdom, the victims had to drink medicated beer with the king out of a special pot, in order that he might have power over their ghosts, lest they should afterwards come back to torment him. They were killed, sometimes by being speared to death, sometimes by being hacked to pieces, sometimes by being burned alive. Contrary to the usual custom of the Baganda, the bodies, or what remained of the bodies, of these unfortunates were always left unburied on the place of execution.<sup>1</sup> In what way precisely the sick king was supposed to benefit by these massacres of his subjects does not appear, but we may surmise that somehow the victims were believed to give their lives for him or to him.

Yet the sacrifices of children to Moloch may be otherwise explained.

Thus it is possible that in Israel also the sacrifices of children to Moloch were in like manner intended to prolong the life of the human king (*melech*) either by serving as substitutes for him or by recruiting his failing energies with their vigorous young life. But it is equally possible, and perhaps more probable, that the sacrifice of the first-born children was only, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> a particular application of the ancient law which devoted to the deity the first-born of every womb, whether of cattle or of human beings.

<sup>1</sup> I have to thank my friend the Rev. the Baganda customs.  
J. Roscoe for the foregoing account of

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 40 sqq



## THE WIDOWED FLAMEN

§ 1. *The Pollution of Death*

A DIFFERENT explanation of the rule which obliged the Flamen Dialis to resign the priesthood on the death of his wife<sup>1</sup> has been suggested by Dr. L. R. Farnell. He supposes that such a bereavement would render the Flamen ceremonially impure, and therefore unfit to hold office.<sup>2</sup> It is true that the ceremonial pollution caused by death commonly disqualifies a man for the discharge of sacred functions, but as a rule the disqualification is only temporary and can be removed by seclusion and the observance of purificatory rites, the length of the seclusion and the nature of the purification varying with the degree of relationship in which the living stand to the dead. Thus, for example, if one of the sacred eunuchs at Hierapolis-Bambyce saw the dead body of a stranger, he was unclean for that day and might not enter the sanctuary of the goddess; but next day after purifying himself he was free to enter. But if the corpse happened to be that of a relation he was unclean for thirty days and had to shave his head before he might set foot within the holy precinct.<sup>3</sup> Again, in the Greek island of Ceos persons who had offered the annual sacrifices to their departed friends were unclean for two days afterwards and might not enter a sanctuary; they had to purify themselves with water.<sup>4</sup> Similarly no one might go into the shrine of Men Tyrannus for ten days after being in contact with the dead.<sup>5</sup> Once more, at Stratonicea in Caria a chorus of thirty noble boys, clad in white and holding branches in their hands, used to sing a hymn daily in honour of Zeus and Hecate; but if one of them were sick or had suffered a domestic bereavement, he was for the time being excused, not permanently excluded, from the

Theory that the resignation of the widowed Flamen Dialis was caused by the pollution of death.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Dittenberger, *Syllage Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>3</sup> Nos. 877, 878.

<sup>2</sup> *The Hibbert Journal*, April 1907, p. 689.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 53.

<sup>5</sup> Dittenberger, *op. cit.* No. 633.

performance of his sacred duties.<sup>1</sup> On the analogy of these and similar cases we should expect to find the widowed Flamen temporarily debarred from the exercise of his office, not permanently relieved of it.

Apparent  
parallel  
among the  
Todas.

However, in support of Dr. Farnell's view I would cite an Indian parallel which was pointed out to me by Dr. W. H. R. Rivers. Among the Todas of the Neilgherry Hills in Southern India the priestly dairyman (*palol*) is a sacred personage, and his life, like that of the Flamen Dialis, is hedged in by many taboos. Now when a death occurs in his clan, the dairyman may not attend any of the funeral ceremonies unless he gives up office, but he may be re-elected after the second funeral ceremonies have been completed. In the interval his place must be taken by a man of another clan. Some eighteen or nineteen years ago a man named Karkievan resigned the office of dairyman when his wife died, but two years later he was re-elected and has held office ever since. There have meantime been many deaths in his clan, but he has not attended a funeral, and has not therefore had to resign his post again. Apparently in old times a more stringent rule prevailed, and the dairyman was obliged to vacate office whenever a death occurred in his clan. For, according to tradition, the clan of Keadrol was divided into its two existing divisions for the express purpose of ensuring that there might still be men to undertake the office of dairyman when a death occurred in the clan, the men of the one division taking office whenever there was a death in the other.<sup>2</sup>

At first sight this case may seem exactly parallel to the case of the Flamen Dialis and the Flaminica on Dr. Farnell's theory; for here there can be no doubt whatever that it is the pollution of death which disqualifies the sacred dairyman from holding office, since, if he only avoids that pollution by not attending the funeral, he is allowed at the present day to retain his post. On this analogy we might suppose that it was not so much the death of his wife as the attendance at her funeral which compelled the Flamen Dialis to resign, especially as we know that he was expressly forbidden to touch a dead body or to enter the place where corpses were burned.<sup>3</sup>

But on  
inspection  
the analogy  
breaks  
down.

But a closer inspection of the facts proves that the analogy breaks down at some important points. For though the Flamen Dialis was forbidden to touch a dead body or to enter a place where corpses were burned, he was permitted to attend a funeral;<sup>4</sup> so that there could hardly be any objection to his attending the funeral of his wife. This permission clearly tells against the view that it was

<sup>1</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, No. 2715, *ὁμοῖς ἐξουσίας τοῖς παύσιν, δάψιντες αὐτῶν μὴ ὅτις ἔχει ἢ πλεῖσθαι ἀκείῳ κατέχουσαι*, where I understand *ἐξουσία* to mean "leave of absence."

<sup>2</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas* (London, 1906), pp. 99 sq.

<sup>3</sup> Aulus Gellius, x. 15. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Aulus Gellius, l.c. 1: "funus tamen exequi non est religio."



the mere pollution of death which obliged him to resign office when his wife died. Further, and this is a point of fundamental difference between the two cases, whereas the Flamen Dialis was bound to be married, and married too by a rite of special solemnity,<sup>1</sup> there is no such obligation on the sacred dairyman of the *Todas*; indeed, if he is married, he is bound to live apart from his wife during his term of office.<sup>2</sup> Surely the obligation laid on the Flamen Dialis to be married of itself implies that with the death of his wife he necessarily ceased to hold office: there is no need to search for another reason in the pollution of death which, as I have just shown, does not seem to square with the permission granted to the Flamen to attend a funeral. That this is indeed the true explanation of the rule in question is strongly suggested by the further and apparently parallel rule which forbade the Flamen to divorce his wife; nothing but death might part them.<sup>3</sup> Now the rule which enjoined that a Flamen must be married, and the rule which forbade him to divorce his wife, have obviously nothing to do with the pollution of death, yet they can hardly be separated from the other rule that with the death of his wife he vacated office. All three rules are explained in the most natural way on the hypothesis which I have adopted, namely, that this married priest and priestess had to perform in common certain rites which the husband could not perform without his wife. The same obvious solution of the problem was suggested long ago by Plutarch, who, after asking why the Flamen Dialis had to lay down office on the death of his wife, says, amongst other things, that "perhaps it is because she performs sacred rites along with him (for many of the rites may not be performed without the presence of a married woman), and to marry another wife immediately on the death of the first would hardly be possible or decent."<sup>4</sup> This simple explanation of the rule seems

<sup>1</sup> Gaius, *Instit.* i. 112, "*quod ius etiam nostris temporibus in usu est: nam flamines maiores, id est Diales, Martiales, Quirinales, item reges sacrorum, nisi ex farreatis nati non leguntur: ac ne ipsi quidem sine confarreatione sacerdotium habere possunt*"; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* iv. 103, "*quae res ad farreatas nuptias pertinet, quibus flamen et flaminicam iure pontificio in matrimonium habere possunt*." For a fuller description of the rite see Servius, on Virgil, *Aen.* iv. 374. From the testimony of Gaius it appears that not only the Flamen Dialis but all the other principal Flamens were bound to be married.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 99. According to an old account,

there was an important exception to the rule, but Dr. Rivers was not able to verify it; he understood that during the tenure of his office the dairyman is really celibate.

<sup>3</sup> Aulus Gellius, x. 15. 23, "*Matrimonium flaminis uix morte dirimi ius non est*"; Festus, p. 89, ed. C. O. Müller, s.v. "*Flammeo*"; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 50. Plutarch mentions as an illegal exception that in his own time the Emperor Domitian allowed a Flamen to divorce his wife, but the ceremony of the divorce was attended by "many awful, strange, and gloomy rites" performed by the priests.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 50. That the wives of Roman priests sided

quite sufficient, and it would clearly hold good whether I am right or wrong in further supposing that the human husband and wife in this case represented a divine husband and wife, a god and goddess, to wit Jupiter and Juno, or rather Dianus (Janus) and Diana;<sup>1</sup> and that supposition in its turn might still hold good even if I were wrong in further conjecturing that of this divine pair the goddess (Juno or rather Diana) was originally the more important partner.

## § 2. *The Marriage of the Roman Gods*

The theory that the Roman gods were celibate is contradicted by Varro and Seneca.

On the other hand, in so far as it assumes that the Roman gods were married, my theory would certainly be untenable if Dr. Farnell were right in assuming, on the authority of Mr. W. Warde Fowler, that the Roman gods were celibate.<sup>2</sup> On that subject, however, Varro, the most learned of Roman antiquaries, was of a contrary opinion. He affirmed in the most unambiguous language that the old Roman gods were married, and in saying so he spoke not of the religion of his own day, which had been modified by Greek influence, but of the religion of the ancient Romans, his ancestors.<sup>3</sup> Seneca ridiculed the marriage of the Roman gods, citing as examples the marriages of Mars and Bellona, of Vulcan and Venus, of Neptune and Salacia, and adding sarcastically that some of the goddesses were spinsters or widows, such as Populonia, Fulgora, and Rumina, whose faded charms or unamiable character had failed to attract a suitor.<sup>4</sup>

Again, the learned Servius, whose commentary on Virgil is a

their husbands in the performance of sacred rites is mentioned by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who attributes the institution of these joint priesthoods to Romulus (*Antiquit. Rom.* ii. 22).

<sup>1</sup> The epithet *Dialis*, which was applied to the *Flaminica* as well as to the *Flamen* (Aulus Gellius, x. 15. 26; Servius, on Virgil, *Aen.* iv. 137) would of itself prove that husband and wife served the same god or pair of gods; and while the word was doubtfully derived by Varro from Jove (*De lingua Latina*, v. 84), we are expressly told that the *Flamen* was the priest and the *Flaminica* the priestess of that god (Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.* 109; Festus, p. 97, ed. C. O. Müller, s.v. "*Flammeo*"). There is therefore every reason to accept the statement of Plutarch (*Quaest. Rom.* 86) that the *Flaminica* was reputed to be sacred to Juno, the divine partner of Jupiter, in spite of the objections raised by Mr. W. Warde Fowler (*Classical Review*,

ix. (1905) pp. 474-499).

<sup>2</sup> *The Hibbert Journal*, iv. (1906) p. 932.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, iv. 32, "*Dicit etiam [scil. Varro] de generationibus deorum magis ad potas quam ad phycos fuisse populos inclinatos, et ideo et sexum et generationes deorum majores suos, id est veteres credidisse Romanos et eorum constituisse conjugia.*"

<sup>4</sup> Seneca, quoted by Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vi. 10, "*Quid quod et matrimonia, inquit, deorum fingimus, et ne pie quidem, fratrum ac sororum? Bellonam Marti conlocamus, Vulcanum Veneri, Neptune Salaciam. Quordam tamen caelibes relinquimus, quasi condicio defecerit, praesertim cum quaedam viduae sint, ut Populonia, vel Fulgora et diva Rumina; quibus non minor petitorum defuisset.*" In this passage the marriage of Venus to Vulcan is probably Greek; all the rest is pure Roman.



gold mine of Roman religious lore, informs us that the pontiffs celebrated the marriage of the infernal deity Orcus with very great solemnity;<sup>1</sup> and for this statement he would seem to have had the authority of the pontifical books themselves, for he refers to them in the same connection only a few lines before. As it is in the highest degree unlikely that the pontiffs would solemnise any foreign rites, we may safely assume that the marriage of Orcus was not borrowed from Greek mythology, but was a genuine old Roman ceremony, and this is all the more probable because Servius, our authority for the custom, has recorded some curious and obviously ancient taboos which were observed at the marriage and in the ritual of Ceres, the goddess who seems to have been joined in wedlock to Orcus. One of these taboos forbade the use of wine, the other forbade persons to name their father or daughter.<sup>2</sup>

The marriage of Orcus.

Further, the learned Roman antiquary Aulus Gellius quotes from "the books of the priests of the Roman people" and from "ancient prayers" (the highest possible authority on the subject) a list of old Roman deities, in which there seem to be at least five pairs of males and females.<sup>3</sup> More than that he proves conclusively by quotations from Plautus, the annalist Cn. Gellius, and Licinius Imbrex that these old writers certainly regarded one at least of the pairs (Mars and Nerio) as husband and wife;<sup>4</sup> and we have good ancient evidence for viewing in the same light three others of the pairs. Thus the old annalist and antiquarian L. Cincius Alimentus, who fought against Hannibal and was captured by him, affirmed in his work on the Roman calendar that Maia was the wife of Vulcan;<sup>5</sup> and as there was a Flamen of Vulcan, who sacrificed to Maia on May Day,<sup>6</sup> it is reasonable to suppose that he was assisted in the ceremony by a Flaminica, his wife, just as on my hypothesis the Flamen Dialis was assisted by his wife the Flaminica. Again, that

Evidence of Aulus Gellius as to the marriage of the Roman gods.

<sup>1</sup> Servius, on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 344. "Aliud est sacrum, aliud nuptias Cereri celebrare, in quibus re vera vinum adhiberi nefas fuerat, quae Orci nuptiae dicebantur, quas praesentia sua pontifices ingenti solemnitate celebrabant."

<sup>2</sup> Servius, on Virgil, *Georg.* i. 344. and on *Aen.* iv. 58. As to the prohibition of wine, compare Macrobius, *Saturn.* iii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Aulus Gellius, xiii. 23 (22), 1-27. "Conprecationes deum immortalium, quae ritu Romano fiunt, expositae sunt in libris sacerdotum populi Romani et in plerisque antiquis orationibus. In his scriptum est: Luani Saturni, Salaciam Neptuni, Horam Quirini, Virites Quirini, Maiam Vulcani,

Heriam Junonis, Moles Martis Nerionemque Martis." As to this list see Mr. W. Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic*, pp. 60-62, who does not admit that the couples recorded are husbands and wives.

<sup>4</sup> Aulus Gellius, xiii. 23 (22), 11-16.

<sup>5</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 12. 18. As to Cincius's work on the calendar see *ib.*, i. 12. 12; and as to his life and works in general see M. Schanz, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, i. 199. The annalist L. Calpurnius Piso said that the name of Vulcan's wife was Majestas, not Maia (Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 12. 18).

<sup>6</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 12. 18.

Salacia was the wife of Neptune is plainly implied by Varro,<sup>1</sup> and positively affirmed by Seneca, Augustine, and Servius.<sup>2</sup> Again, Ennius appears to have regarded Hora as the wife of Quirinus, for in the first book of his *Annals* he declared his devotion to that divine pair.<sup>3</sup> In fact, of the five pairs of male and female deities cited by Aulus Gellius from the priestly books and ancient prayers the only one as to which we have not independent evidence that it consisted of a husband and wife is Saturn and Lua; and in regard to Lua we know that she was spoken of as a mother,<sup>4</sup> which renders it not improbable that she was also a wife. However, according to some very respectable authorities the wife of Saturn was not Lua, but Ops,<sup>5</sup> so that we have two independent lines of proof that Saturn was supposed to be married. Lastly, it seems difficult to deny that the epithets "father" and "mother" which the Romans bestowed on many of their deities<sup>6</sup> do really imply paternity and maternity; and if the implication is admitted, the inference appears to be inevitable that these divine beings were supposed to exercise sexual functions, whether in lawful marriage or in unlawful concubinage. As to Jupiter in particular his paternity is positively attested by Latin inscriptions, one of them very old, which describe Fortuna Primigenia, the great goddess of Praeneste, as his daughter.<sup>7</sup>

Paternity  
and  
maternity  
of Roman  
deities.

<sup>1</sup> Varro, *De lingua Latina*, v. 72, "*Salacia Neptuni a sala*." This was probably one of the cases which Varro had in his mind when he stated that the ancient Roman gods were married.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vii. 22, "*Jam utique habebat Salaciam Neptunus uxorem*"; Servius, on Virgil, *Aen.* x. 76, "*Sane hanc Veniliam quidam Salaciam accipiunt, Neptuni uxorem*." As for Seneca's evidence see above, p. 410, note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Noms Marcellus, p. 125, ed. L. Quicherat, "*Hora juvenutis dea. Ennius Annalium lib. i. [Tegeus] Quirine pater, venerar, Horamque Quirini*."

<sup>4</sup> Livy, viii. 1. 6, xlv. 33. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Festus, p. 187, ed. C. O. Müller, "*Opis dicta est conjux Saturni*"; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 10, 19, "*Hanc autem diam Opem Saturni conjugem crediderunt, et ideo hoc mense Saturnalia itemque Opalia celebrari, quod Saturnus ejusque uxor tam frugum quam fructuum repertores esse creduntur*."

<sup>6</sup> Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.* iv. 3, "*Itaque et Jupiter a parentibus pater vocatur, et Saturnus, et Janus, et*

*Liber, et ceteri deinceps, quod Lucilius in deorum consilio irridet:*

*Ut nemo sit nostrum, quin aut pater optimus divum*

*Ut Neptunus pater, Liber, Saturnus pater, Mars,*

*Janus, Quirinus pater nomen dicatur ad unum."*

Compare Aulus Gellius, v. 12. 5; Servius, on Virgil, *Georg.* ii. 4. Roman goddesses who received the title of Mother were Vesta, Earth, Ops, Matuta, and Lua. As to Mother Vesta see my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, p. 222; as to Mother Earth see H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 3950-3955, 3960; as to Mother Ops see Varro, *De lingua Latina*, v. 64; as to Mother Matuta see L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,<sup>3</sup> i. 322 sq.; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, pp. 97-99.

<sup>7</sup> See *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, xiv. Nos. 2862, 2863; H. Dessau, *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, Nos. 3684, 3685; W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, i. 1542; G. Wissowa,



On the whole, if we follow the authority of the ancients themselves, we have no choice but to conclude that the Roman gods, like those of many other early peoples, were married. It is true that, compared with the full-blooded gods of Greece, the deities of Rome appear to us shadowy creatures, pale abstractions garbed in little that can vie with the gorgeous pall of myth and story which Grecian fancy threw around its divine creations. Yet the few specimens of Roman mythology which have survived the wreck of antiquity<sup>1</sup> justify us in believing that they are but fragments of far more copious traditions which have perished. At all events the comparative aridity and barrenness of the Roman religious imagination is no reason for setting aside the positive testimony of learned Roman writers as to a point of fundamental importance in their own religion about which they could hardly be mistaken. It should never be forgotten that on this subject the ancients had access to many sources of information which are no longer open to us, and for a modern scholar to reject their evidence in favour of a personal impression derived from a necessarily imperfect knowledge of the facts seems scarcely consistent with sound principles of history and criticism.<sup>2</sup>

We must conclude that the Roman gods were married.

### § 3. *Children of Living Parents in Ritual*

But Dr. Farnell adduces another argument in support of his view that it was the pollution of death which obliged the widowed Flamen Dialis to resign the priesthood. He points to what he con-

Rule of Greek and Roman ritual that certain offices could only be held by boys whose parents were both alive.

*Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 209. I have to thank my learned and candid friend Mr. W. Warde Fowler for referring me to this good evidence of Jupiter's paternal character. For evidence of the paternity of the Roman fire-god see my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 218 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> In support of his view that the Romans did not think of their gods as married, Mr. Warde Fowler alleges that "at no period were they really interested in the gods themselves, but only in their relations to human beings" (*Classical Review*, ix. 475). With all respect for Mr. Warde Fowler's authority on Roman religion, I am unable to give much weight to this particular opinion of his, because it seems to be a mere assumption based on negative evidence and contradicted by such fragments of Roman mythology as have survived. See the preceding note.

<sup>1</sup> Such, for example, as the loves of Vertumnus for Pomona (Ovid, *Metam.* xiv. 623 sqq.), of Jupiter for Juturna (Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 585 sqq.), and of Janus for Carna (Ovid, *Fasti*, vi. 101 sqq.) and for Canasene (Servius, on Virgil, *Aen.* viii. 330). The water-nymph Juturna beloved by Jupiter is said to have been the daughter of the river Vultumnus, the wife of Janus, and the mother of Fontus (Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, iii. 29). Janus in particular would seem to have been the theme of many myths, and his claim to be a genuine Italian god has never been disputed.

The marriage of the Roman gods has been denied by E. Aust (*Die Religion der Römer*, pp. 19 sq.) and G. Wissowa (*Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 23) as well as by Mr. W. Warde Fowler. On the other hand, the evidence for it has been clearly and concisely stated by L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*,<sup>2</sup> i. 55-57.

siders the analogy of the rule of Greek ritual which required that certain sacred offices should be discharged only by a boy whose parents were both alive.<sup>1</sup> This rule he would explain in like manner by supposing that the death of one or both of his parents would render a boy ceremonially impure and therefore unfit to perform religious functions. Dr. Farnell might have apparently strengthened his case by observing that the Flamen Dialis and the Flaminica Dialis were themselves assisted in their office, the one by a boy, the other by a girl, both of whose parents must be alive.<sup>2</sup> At first sight this fits in perfectly with his theory: the Flamen, the Flaminica, and their youthful ministers were all rendered incapable of performing their sacred duties by the taint or corruption of death.

But a closer scrutiny of the argument reveals a flaw. It proves too much. For observe that in these Greek and Roman offices held by boys and girls the disqualification caused by the death of a parent is necessarily lifelong, since the bereavement is irreparable. Accordingly, if Dr. Farnell's theory is right, the ceremonial pollution which is the cause of the disqualification must also be lifelong; in other words, every orphan is ceremonially unclean for life and thereby excluded for ever from the discharge of sacred duties. So sweeping a rule would at a stroke exclude a large, if not the larger, part of the population of any country from the offices of religion, and lay them permanently under all those burdensome restrictions which the pollution of death entails among many nations; for obviously a large, if not the larger, part of the population of any country at any time has lost one or both of its parents by death. No people, so far as I know, has ever carried the theory of the ceremonial pollution of death to this extremity in practice. And even if it were supposed that the taint wore off or evaporated with time from common folk so as to let them go about their common duties in everyday life, would it not still cleave to priests? If it incapacitated the Flamen's minister, would it not incapacitate the Flamen himself? In other words, would not the Flamen Dialis be obliged to vacate office on the death of his father or mother? There is no hint in ancient writers that he had to do so. And while it is generally unsafe to argue from the silence of our authorities, I think that we may do so in this case without being rash; for Plutarch not only mentions but discusses the rule which obliged the Flamen Dialis to resign office on the death of his wife,<sup>3</sup> and if he

<sup>1</sup> *The Hibbert Journal*, April 1907, p. 689. Such a boy was called a *παῖς ἀμφιθαλής*, "a boy blooming on both sides," the metaphor being drawn from a tree which sends out branches on both sides. See Plato, *Lysis*, xi. 8, p. 927 D; Pollux, iii. 25; Hesychius and Suidas, s.v. ἀμφιθαλής.

<sup>2</sup> Festus, p. 93, ed. C. O. Müller, s.vv. "Flaminus" and "Flaminia." That certain Roman rites had to be performed by the children of living parents is mentioned in general terms by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Antiquit. Rom.* ii. 22).

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 50.

that the rule which excludes orphans from certain sacred offices cannot be based on a theory that they are ceremonially unclean through the death of their parents.



had known of a parallel rule which compelled him to retire on the death of a parent, he would surely have mentioned it. But if the ceremonial pollution which would certainly be caused by the death of a parent did not compel the Flamen Dialis to vacate office, we may safely conclude that neither did the similar pollution caused by the death of his wife. Thus the argument adduced by Dr. Farnell in favour of his view proves on analysis to tell strongly against it.

But if the rule which excluded orphans from certain sacred offices cannot with any probability be explained on the theory of their ceremonial pollution, it may be worth while to inquire whether another and better explanation of the rule cannot be found. For that purpose I shall collect all the cases of it known to me. The collection is doubtless far from complete: I only offer it as a starting-point for research.

At the time of the vintage, which in Greece falls in October, Athenian boys chosen from every tribe assembled at the sanctuary of Dionysus, the god of the vine. There, branches of vines laden with ripe grapes were given to them, and holding them in their hands they raced to the sanctuary of Athena Sciras. The winner received and drained a cup containing a mixture of olive-oil, wine, honey, cheese, and barley-groats. It was necessary that both the parents of each of these boy-runners should be alive.<sup>1</sup> At the same festival, and perhaps on the same day, an Athenian boy, whose parents must both be alive, carried in procession a branch of olive wreathed with white and purple wool and decked with fruits of many kinds, while a chorus sang that the branch bore figs, fat loaves, honey, oil, and wine. Thus they went in procession to a temple of Apollo, at the door of which the boy deposited the holy bough. The ceremony is said to have been instituted by the Athenians in obedience to an oracle for the purpose of supplicating the help of the god in a season of dearth.<sup>2</sup> Similar boughs similarly laden with fruits and loaves were hung up on the doors of every Athenian house and allowed to remain there a year, at the end of which they were replaced by fresh ones. While the branch was being fastened to the door, a boy whose parents were both alive recited the same verses about the branch bearing figs, fat loaves, honey, oil, and wine. This custom also is said to have been instituted for the sake of putting an end to a dearth.<sup>3</sup> The

Examples of the exclusion of orphans from sacred offices.

Boys and girls of living parents employed in Greek rites at the vintage, harvest-home, and sowing.

<sup>1</sup> Proclus, in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, p. 322 A, ed. I. Bekker; Athenaeus, xl. 92, pp. 495 19.; Scholiast on Nicander, *Alexipharmaca*, 109. Only the last of these writers mentions that the boys had to be ἀμφότεροι. As to this and the following custom, see A. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum*, pp. 278 199.; W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*,

pp. 214 199.

<sup>2</sup> Eustathius, on Homer, *Iliad*, xxii. 495, p. 1283; *Etymologicum Magnum*, p. 303. 18 199., s.v. Ἐπειρώκη; Plutarch, *Thesur*, 22. According to a scholiast on Aristophanes (*Plutus*, 1054), the branch might be either of olive or laurel.

<sup>3</sup> Scholiast on Aristophanes, *Plutus*, 1054.

people of Magnesia on the Maeander vowed a bull every year to Zeus, the Saviour of the City, in the month of Cronion, at the beginning of sowing, and after maintaining the animal at the public expense throughout the winter they sacrificed it, apparently at harvest-time, in the following summer. Nine boys and nine girls, whose fathers and mothers were all living, took part in the religious services of the consecration and the sacrifice of the bull. At the consecration public prayers were offered for the safety of the city and the land, for the safety of the citizens and their wives and children, for the safety of all that dwelt in the city and the land, for peace and wealth and abundance of corn and all other fruits, and for the cattle. A herald led the prayers, and the priest and priestess, the boys and girls, the high officers and magistrates, all joined in these solemn petitions for the welfare of their country.<sup>1</sup>

The rites thus far described, in which boys and girls of living parents took part, were clearly ceremonies intended specially to ensure the fertility of the soil. This is indicated not merely by the nature of the rites and of the prayers or verses which accompanied them, but also by the seasons at which they were observed; for these were the vintage, the harvest-home, and the beginning of sowing. We may therefore compare a custom practised by the Roman Brethren of the Ploughed Fields (*Fratres Arvales*), a college of priests whose business it was to perform the rites deemed necessary for the growth of the corn. As a badge of office they wore wreaths of corn-ears, and paid their devotions to an antique goddess of fertility, the Dea Dia. Her home was in a grove of ancient evergreen oaks and laurels out in the Campagna, five miles from Rome. Hither every year in the month of May, when the fields were ripe or ripening to the sickle, reaped ears of the new corn were brought and hallowed by the Brethren with quaint rites, that a blessing might rest on the coming harvest. The first or preliminary consecration of the ears, however, took place, not in the grove, but in the house of the Master of the Brethren at Rome. Here the Brethren were waited upon by four free-born boys, the children of living fathers and mothers. While the Brethren reclined on couches, the boys were allowed to sit on chairs and partake of the feast, and when it was over they carried the rest of the now hallowed corn and laid it on the altar.<sup>2</sup>

Boys of  
living  
parents  
employed  
in the rites  
of the  
Arval  
Brethren.

<sup>1</sup> O. Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander* (Berlin, 1900), No. 98; Dittenberger, *Syllabi Inscriptionum Graecarum*,<sup>3</sup> No. 553. This inscription has been well expounded by Prof. M. P. Nilsson (*Griechische Feste*, pp. 23-27). I follow him and Dittenberger in regarding the month of Artemision, when the bull was

sacrificed, as the harvest month corresponding to the Attic Thargelion.

<sup>2</sup> G. Henzen, *Acta Fratrum Arvalium*, pp. vi. 19., cix. cx. cxix. clii. clix. clxxvii. 12, 13, 13. As to the evergreen oaks and laurels of the grove, see *ib.*, pp. 137, 138; as to the wreaths of corn-ears, see *ib.*, pp. 26, 28; Aulus Gellius, vii. 7. 8.



In these and all other rites intended to ensure the fertility of the ground, of cattle, or of human beings, the employment of children of living parents seems to be intelligible on the principle of sympathetic magic; for such children might be deemed fuller of life than orphans, either because they "flourished on both sides," as the Greeks put it, or because the very survival of their parents might be taken as a proof that the stock of which the children came was vigorous and therefore able to impart of its superabundant energy to others.

But the rites in which the children of living parents are required to officiate do not always aim at promoting the growth of the crops. At Olympia the olive-branches which formed the victors' crowns had to be cut from a sacred tree with a golden sickle by a lad whose father and mother must be both alive.<sup>1</sup> The tree was a wild olive growing within the holy precinct, at the west end of the temple of Zeus. It bore the name of the Olive of the Fair Crown, and near it was an altar to the Nymphs of the Fair Crowns.<sup>2</sup> At Delphi every eighth year a sacred drama or miracle-play was acted which drew crowds of spectators from all parts of Greece. It set forth the slaying of the Dragon by Apollo. The principal part was sustained by a lad, the son of living parents, who seems to have personated the god himself. In an open space the likeness of a lordly palace, erected for the occasion, represented the Dragon's den. It was attacked and burned by the lad, aided by women who carried blazing torches. When the Dragon had received his deadly wound, the lad, still acting the part of the god, fled far away to be purged of the guilt of blood in the beautiful Vale of Tempe, where the Peneus flows in a deep wooded gorge between the snowy peaks of Olympus and Ossa, its smooth and silent tide shadowed by overhanging trees and tall white cliffs. In places these great crags rise abruptly from the stream and approach each other so near that only a narrow strip of sky is visible overhead; but where they recede a little, the meadows at their foot are verdant with evergreen shrubs, among which Apollo's own laurel may still be seen. In antiquity the god himself, stained with the Dragon's blood, is said to have come, a haggard footsore wayfarer, to this wild secluded glen and there plucked branches from one of the laurels that grew in its green thickets beside the rippling river. Some of them he used to twine a wreath for his

In fertility rites the employment of such children is intelligible on the principle of sympathetic magic.

Sons of living parents employed to cut the olive-wreath at Olympia and the laurel-wreath at Tempe.

That the rites performed by the Arval Brothers were intended to make the fields bear corn is expressly stated by Varro (*De lingua Latina*, v. 85, "*Fratres Arvales dicti sunt, qui sacra publica faciunt propterea ut fruges ferant arva*"). On the Arval Brothers and their rites see also L. Preller,

*Römische Mythologie*,<sup>1</sup> ii. 29 177.; J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 447-462; G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, pp. 485-488.

<sup>1</sup> Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* iii. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, v. 15. 3.

brows, one of them he carried in his hand, doubtless in order that, guarded by the sacred plant, he might escape the hobgoblins which dogged his steps. So the boy, his human representative, did the same, and brought back to Delphi wreaths of laurel from the same tree to be awarded to the victors in the Pythian games. Hence the whole festival of the Slaying of the Dragon at Delphi went by the name of the Festival of Crowning.<sup>1</sup> From this it appears that at Delphi as well as at Olympia the boughs which were used to crown the victors had to be cut from a sacred tree by a boy whose parents must be both alive.

At Thebes a festival called the Laurel-bearing was held once in every eight years, when branches of laurel were carried in procession to the temple of Apollo. The principal part in the procession was taken by a boy who held a laurel bough and bore the title of the Laurel-bearer: he seems to have personated the god himself. His hair hung down on his shoulders, and he wore a golden crown, a bright-coloured robe, and shoes of a special shape: both his parents must be alive.<sup>2</sup> We may suppose that the golden crown which he wore was fashioned in the shape of laurel leaves and replaced a wreath of real laurel. Thus the boy with the laurel wreath on his head and the laurel bough in his hand would resemble the traditional equipment of Apollo when he purified himself for the slaughter of the dragon. We may conjecture that at Thebes the Laurel-bearer originally personated not Apollo but the local hero Cadmus, who slew the dragon and had like Apollo to purify himself for the slaughter. The conjecture is confirmed by vase-paintings which represent Cadmus crowned with laurel preparing to attack the dragon or actually in combat with the monster, while goddesses bend over him holding out wreaths of laurel as the mede of victory.<sup>3</sup> On this hypothesis the octennial Delphic Festival of Crowning and the octennial Theban Festival of Laurel-bearing were closely akin: in both the prominent part played by the laurel was purificatory or expiatory.<sup>4</sup> Thus at Olympia, Delphi, and Thebes a boy whose

Sons of  
living  
parents  
acted as  
Laurel-  
bearers at  
Thebes.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Quæstiones Græcæ*, 12; *id.*, *De defectu oraculorum*, 15; Aelian, *Varia Historia*, iii. 1; Strabo, ix. 3. 12, p. 422. In a note on Pausanias (ii. 7. 7, vol. iii. pp. 53 *sqq.*) I have described the festival more fully and adduced savage parallels. As to the Vale of Tempe, see W. M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, iii. 390 *sqq.* The rhetoric of Livy (xliv. 6. 8) has lashed the smooth and silent current of the Peneus into a roaring torrent.

<sup>2</sup> Proclus, in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, ed. I. Bekker, p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Roscher, *Lexikon der griech. und röm. Mythologie*, ii. 830,

838, 839. On an Etruscan mirror the scene of Cadmus's combat with the dragon is surrounded with a wreath of laurel (Roscher, *op. cit.* ii. 862). Mr. A. B. Cook was the first to call attention to these vase-paintings in confirmation of my view that the Festival of the Laurel-bearing celebrated the destruction of the dragon by Cadmus. See *Folk-lore*, xv. (1904) p. 411 note 224; and my note on Pausanias, ix. 10. 4 (vol. v. pp. 41 *sqq.*).

<sup>4</sup> I have examined both festivals more closely in the forthcoming third edition of *The Golden Bough*, and have shown grounds for holding that the



parents were both alive was entrusted with the duty of cutting or wearing a sacred wreath at a great festival which recurred at intervals of several years.<sup>1</sup> Why a boy of living parents should be chosen for such an office is not at first sight clear; the reason might be more obvious if we understood the ideas in which the custom of wearing wreaths and crowns had its origin. Probably in many cases wreaths and crowns were amulets before they were ornaments; in other words, their first intention may have been not so much to adorn the head as to protect it from harm by surrounding it with a plant, a metal, or any other thing which was supposed to possess the magical virtue of banning baleful influences. On this hypothesis we can understand not only why sacred persons such as priests and kings wore crowns, but also why dead bodies, sacrificial victims, and in certain circumstances even inanimate objects such as the implements of sacrifice, the doors of houses, and so forth, were decorated or rather guarded by wreaths.<sup>2</sup> Further, on this hypo-

If wreaths were originally amulets, we could understand why children of living parents were chosen to cut and wear them.

old octennial cycle in Greece, based on an attempt to harmonise solar and lunar time, gave rise to an octennial festival at which the mythical marriage of the sun and moon was celebrated by the dramatic marriage of human actors, who appear sometimes to have been the king and queen. In the Laurel-bearing at Thebes a clear reference to the astronomical character of the festival is contained in the emblems of the sun, moon, stars, and days of the year which were carried in procession (Proclus, *l.c.*); and another reference to it may be detected in the legendary marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia. Dr. L. R. Farnell supposes that the festival of the Laurel-bearing "belongs to the Maypole processions universal in the peasant-religion of Europe, of which the object is to quicken the vitalising powers of the year in the middle of spring or at the beginning of summer" (*The Cults of the Greek States*, iv. 285). But this explanation appears to be inconsistent with the octennial period of the festival.

<sup>1</sup> We may conjecture that the Olympic, like the Delphic and the Theban, festival was at first octennial, though in historical times it was quadriennial. Certainly it seems to have been based on an octennial cycle. See the Scholiast on Pindar, *Olymp.* iii. 35 (20); Aug. Boeckh on Pindar, *Explicationes*, p. 138; L. Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und*

*technischen Chronologie*, i. 366 sq.; G. F. Unger, "Zeitrechnung der Griechen und Römer," in Iwan Müller's *Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, i. 605 sq.; K. O. Müller, *Die Dorer*,<sup>2</sup> ii. 483. The Pythian games, which appear to have been at first identical with the Delphic Festival of Crowning, were held originally at intervals of eight instead of four years. See the Scholiast on Pindar, *Pyth. Argum.* p. 298, ed. A. Boeckh; Censorinus, *De die natali*, xviii. 6; compare Eustathius on Homer, *Od.* iii. 267, p. 1466. 29. As to the original identity of the Pythian games and the Festival of Crowning, see Th. Schreiber, *Apollon Pythaktones* (Leipzig, 1879), pp. 37 sq.; A. B. Cook, in *Folk-lore*, xv. (1904) pp. 404 sq.

<sup>2</sup> On the use of crowns and wreaths in classical antiquity, see W. Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*,<sup>2</sup> i. 545 sqq., s.v. "Corona"; Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, iii. 1520 sqq. In time of mourning the ancients laid aside crowns (Athenaeus, xv. 16, p. 675 A); and so did the king at Athens when he tried a homicide (Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 57). I mention these cases because they seem to conflict with the theory in the text, in accordance with which crowns might be regarded as amulets to protect the wearer against ghosts and the pollution of blood.

thesis we may perhaps perceive why children of living parents were specially chosen to cut or wear sacred wreaths. Since such children were apparently supposed to be endowed with a more than common share of vital energy, they might be deemed peculiarly fitted to make or wear amulets which were designed to protect the wearer from injury and death: the current of life which circulated in their own veins overflowed, as it were, and reinforced the magic virtue of the wreath. For the same reason such children would naturally be chosen to personate gods, as they seemingly were at Delphi and Thebes.

Children of living parents acting as priest and priestess of Apollo and Artemis. At Rome the Vestals and the Salii must be the children of parents who were alive at the date of the election.

At Ephesus, if we may trust the evidence of the Greek romance-writer, Heliodorus, a boy and girl of living parents used to hold for a year the priesthood of Apollo and Artemis respectively. When their period of office was nearly expired, they led a sacred embassy to Delos, the birthplace of the divine brother and sister, where they superintended the musical and athletic contests and laid down the priesthood.<sup>1</sup> At Rome no girl might be chosen a Vestal Virgin unless both her father and mother were living;<sup>2</sup> yet there is no evidence or probability that a Vestal vacated office on the death of a parent; indeed she generally held office for life.<sup>3</sup> This alone may suffice to prove that the custom of entrusting certain sacred duties to children of living parents was not based on any notion that orphans as such were ceremonially unclean. Again, the dancing priests of Mars, the Salii, must be sons of living parents;<sup>4</sup> but as in the case of the Vestals this condition probably only applied at the date of their election, for they seem like the Vestals to have held office for life. At all events we read of a lively old gentleman who still skipped and capered about as a dancing priest with an agility which threw the efforts of his younger colleagues into the shade.<sup>5</sup> Again, at the public games in Rome boys of living parents had to escort the images of the gods in their sacred cars, and it was a dire omen if one of them relaxed his hold on the holy cart or let a strap slip from his fingers.<sup>6</sup> And when the stout Roman heart was shaken by the appalling news that somebody had been struck by lightning, that the sky had somewhere been suddenly overcast, or that a she-mule had been safely delivered of a colt, boys and girls whose fathers and mothers were still alive used to be sought out and

Children of living parents employed in explanatory rites at Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, l. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Aulus Gellius, l. 12. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Dionysius Halicarnassensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* ii. 67; Plutarch, *Numa*, 10. We read of a Vestal who held office for fifty-seven years (Tacitus, *Annals*, ii. 86). It is unlikely that the parents of this venerable lady were both alive at the date of her decease.

<sup>4</sup> Dionysius Halicarnassensis, *Antiquit. Rom.* ii. 71.

<sup>5</sup> Macrobius, *Sat.* iii. 14. 14. That the rule as to their parents being both alive applied to the Vestals and Salii only at the time of their entrance on office is recognised by Manquardt (*Römische Staatsverwaltung*, iii.<sup>2</sup> 228, note 1).

<sup>6</sup> Cicero, *De haruspicium responsis*, 11.



employed to help in expiating the terrific prodigy.<sup>1</sup> Again, when the Capitol had been sacked and burned by the disorderly troops of Vitellius, solemn preparations were made to rebuild it. The whole area was enclosed by a cordon of fillets and wreaths. Then soldiers chosen for their auspicious names entered within the barriers holding branches of lucky trees in their hands; and afterwards the Vestal Virgins, aided by boys and girls of living parents, washed the foundations with water drawn from springs and rivers.<sup>2</sup> In this ceremony the choice of such children seems to be based on the same idea as the choice of such water; for as running water is deemed to be especially alive,<sup>3</sup> so the vital current might be thought to flow without interruption in the children of living parents but to stagnate in orphans. Hence the children of living parents rather than orphans would naturally be chosen to pour the living water over the foundations, and so to lend something of their own vitality or endurance to a building that was designed to last for ever.

On the same principle we can easily understand why the children of living parents should be especially chosen to perform certain offices at marriage. The motive of such a choice may be a wish to ensure by sympathetic magic the life of the newly wedded pair and of their offspring. Thus at Roman marriages the bride was escorted to her new home by three boys whose parents were all living. Two of the boys held her, and the third carried a torch of buckthorn or hawthorn in front of her,<sup>4</sup> probably for the purpose of averting the powers of evil; for buckthorn or hawthorn was credited with this magical virtue.<sup>5</sup> At marriages in ancient Athens a boy whose parents were both living used to wear a wreath of thorns and acorns and to carry about a winnowing-fan full of loaves, crying, "I have escaped the bad, I have found the better."<sup>6</sup> In modern Greece on the Sunday before a marriage the bridegroom sends to the bride the wedding cake by the hands of a boy, both of whose parents must be living. The messenger takes great care not to stumble or to injure the cake, for to do either would be a very bad omen. He may not enter the bride's house till she has taken the cake from him. For this purpose he lays it down on the threshold of the door, and then both of them, the boy and the bride, rush at it and try to seize the greater part of the cake. And

Children of living parents employed at marriage ceremonies in Greece, Italy, Albania, Bulgaria, and Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Livy, xxxvii. 3; Macrobius, *Saturn.* i. 6. 13 sq.; Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, 19 (where the words "*patrimis matrinisq; pueris carmen indicite*" are omitted from the text by H. Peter).

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus, *Histor.* iv. 53. For the sack and conflagration of the Capitol, see *ibid.* iii. 71-75.

<sup>3</sup> Flowing water in Hebrew is called "living water" (עֵינַי חַיִּים).

<sup>4</sup> Festus, pp. 244, 245, ed. C. O.

Müller, *s.v.* "*Patrimi et nutritimi pueri.*"

<sup>5</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, vi. 129 sq., 165-168.

<sup>6</sup> Zenobius, *Proverb.* iii. 98; Plutarch, *Proverb.* i. 16; Apostolius, *Proverb.* viii. 16 (*Paroemiographi Graeci*, ed. Leutsch et Schneidewin, i. 82, 323 sq., ii. 429); Eustathius, on Homer, *Od.* xii. 357, p. 1726; Photius, *Lexicon*, *s.v.* *ἑσπέρων κέρβε*.

when cattle are being slaughtered for the marriage festivities, the first beast killed for the bride's house must be killed by a youth whose parents are both alive. Further, a son of living parents must solemnly fetch the water with which the bridegroom's head is ceremonially washed by women before marriage. And on the day after the marriage bride and bridegroom go in procession to the well or spring from which they are henceforth to fetch their water. The bride greets the spring, drinks of the water from the hollow of her hand, and throws money and food into it. Then follows a dance, accompanied by a song, round about the spring. Lastly, a lad whose parents are both living draws water from the spring in a special vessel and carries it to the house of the bridal pair without speaking a word: this "unspoken water," as it is called, is regarded as peculiarly holy and wholesome. When the young couple return from the spring, they fill their mouths with the "unspoken water" and try to spirt it on each other inside the door of the house.<sup>1</sup> In Albania, when women are baking cakes for a wedding, the first to put hand to the dough must be a maiden whose parents are both alive and who has brothers, the more the better; for only such a girl is deemed lucky. And when the bride has dismounted from her horse at the bridegroom's door, a small boy whose parents are both alive (for only such a boy is thought to bring luck) is passed thrice backwards and forwards under the horse's belly, as if he would girdle the beast.<sup>2</sup> Among the South Slavs of Bulgaria a little child whose father and mother are both alive helps to bake the two bridal cakes, pouring water and salt on the meal and stirring the mixture with a spurtle of a special shape; then a girl lifts the child in her arms, and the little one touches the roof-beam thrice with the spurtle, saying, "Boys and girls." And when the bride's hair is to be dressed for the wedding day, the work of combing and plaiting it must be begun by a child of living parents.<sup>3</sup> Among the Eesa and Gadabursi, two Somali tribes, on the morning after a marriage "the bride's female relations bring presents of milk, and are accompanied by a young male child whose parents are living. The child drinks some of the milk before any one else tastes it; and after him the bridegroom, if his parents are living; but if one or both of his parents are dead, and those of the bride living, she drinks after the child. By doing this they believe that if the newly married woman bears a child the father will be alive at the time."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im neuen* (Bonn, 1864), pp. 83-85, 86, 87, 100 sq.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* (Jena, 1854), i. 144, 146.

<sup>3</sup> F. S. Krauss, *Sitte und Brauch der Süd-Slaven* (Vienna, 1885), pp. 438, 441.

<sup>4</sup> Captain J. S. King, "Notes on the Folk-lore and some Social Customs of the Western Somali Tribes," *The Folk-lore Journal*, vi. (1888) p. 118. Compare Ph. Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost-Afrikas, die materielle Cultur der Dandakil, Galla und Somali* (Berlin, 1893), p. 200.



In this last custom the part played by the child of living parents is unambiguous and helps to throw light on the obscurer cases which precede. Such a child is clearly supposed to impart the virtue of longevity to the milk of which it partakes, and so to transmit it to the newly married pair who afterwards drink of the milk. Similarly, we may suppose that in all marriage rites at least, if not in religious rites generally, the employment of children of living parents is intended to diffuse by sympathy the blessings of life and longevity among all who participate in the ceremonies. The same idea may explain a funeral custom observed by the Sihanaka of Madagascar. After a burial the family of the deceased, with their near relatives and dependents, meet in the house from which the corpse was lately removed "to drink rum and to undergo a purifying and preserving baptism called *fify rānom-bbāhāngy*. Leaves of the lemon or lime tree, and the stalks of two kinds of grass, are gathered and placed in a vessel with water. A person, both of whose parents are living, is chosen to perform the rite, and this 'holy water' is then sprinkled upon the walls of the house and upon all assembled within them, and finally around the house outside."<sup>1</sup> Here a person whose parents are both living appears to be credited with a more than common share of life and longevity; from which it naturally follows that he is better fitted than any one else to perform a ceremony intended to avert the danger of death from the household.

Child of living parents employed in funeral rites.

The notion that a child of living parents is endowed with a higher degree of vitality than an orphan probably explains all the cases of the employment of such a child in ritual, whether the particular rite is designed to ensure the fertility of the ground or the fruitfulness of women, or to avert the danger of death and other calamities. Yet it would probably be a mistake to suppose that this notion is always clearly apprehended by the persons who practise the customs. In their minds the definite conception of superabundant and overflowing vitality may easily dissolve into a vague idea that the child of living parents is luckier than other folk. No more than this seems to be at the bottom of the Masai rule that when the warriors wish to select a chief, they must choose "a man whose parents are still alive, who owns cattle and has never killed anybody, whose parents are not blind, and who himself has not a discoloured eye."<sup>2</sup> And nothing more is needed to explain the ancient Greek custom which assigned the duty of drawing lots from an urn to a boy under puberty whose father and mother were both in life.<sup>3</sup>

The use of children of living parents in ritual may be explained by a notion that they are fuller of life and therefore luckier than orphans.

<sup>1</sup> J. Pearse, "Customs connected with Death and Burial among the Sihanaka," *The Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine*, vol. II. (a reprint of the second four numbers,

1881-1884) (Antananarivo, 1896) p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> Lucian, *Hermetismus*, 57.

### III

#### A CHARM TO PROTECT A TOWN

The Bechuannas use the hide of a sacrificial ox at founding a new town.

THE tradition that a Lydian king tried to make the citadel of Sardes impregnable by carrying round it a lion<sup>1</sup> may perhaps be illustrated by a South African custom. When the Bechuannas are about to found a new town, they observe an elaborate ritual. They choose a bull from the herd, sew up its eyelids with sinew, and then allow the blinded animal to wander at will for four days. On the fifth day they track it down and sacrifice it at sunset on the spot where it happens to be standing. The carcase is then roasted whole and divided among the people. Ritual requires that every particle of the flesh should be consumed on the spot. When the sacrificial meal is over, the medicine-men take the hide and mark it with appropriate medicines, the composition of which is a professional secret. Then with one long spiral cut they convert the whole hide into a single thong. Having done so they cut up the thong into lengths of about two feet and despatch messengers in all directions to peg down one of those strips in each of the paths leading to the new town. "After this," it is said, "if a foreigner approaches the new town to destroy it with his charms, he will find that the town has prepared itself for his coming."<sup>2</sup> Thus it would seem that the pastoral Bechuannas attempt to place a new town under the protection of one of their sacred cattle<sup>3</sup> by distributing pieces of its hide at all points where an enemy could approach it, just as the Lydian king thought to place the citadel of his capital under the protection of the lion-god by carrying the animal round the boundaries.

The custom may explain the legend of the foundation of Carthage and similar tales.

Further, the Bechuana custom may throw light on a widespread legend which relates how a wily settler in a new country bought from the natives as much land as could be covered with a hide, and how he then proceeded to cut the hide into thongs and to claim as much land as could be enclosed by the thongs. It was thus,

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. W. C. Willoughby, "Notes on the Totemism of the Bechuana," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. (1905) pp. 303 sq.

<sup>3</sup> For more evidence of the sanctity of cattle among the Bechuannas see the Rev. W. C. Willoughby, *op. cit.* pp. 301 sqq.



according to the Hottentots, that the first European settlers obtained a footing in South Africa.<sup>1</sup> But the most familiar example of such stories is the tradition that Dido procured the site of Carthage in this fashion, and that the place hence received the name of Byrsa or "hide."<sup>2</sup> Similar tales occur in the legendary history of Saxons and Danes,<sup>3</sup> and they meet us in India, Siberia, Burma, Cambodia, Java, and Bali.<sup>4</sup> The wide diffusion of such stories confirms the conjecture of Jacob Grimm that in them we have a reminiscence of a mode of land measurement which was once actually in use, and of which the designation is still retained in the English *hide*.<sup>5</sup> The Bechuana custom suggests that the mode of measuring by a hide may have originated in a practice of encompassing a piece of land with thongs cut from the hide of a sacrificial victim in order to place the ground under the guardianship of the sacred animal.

But why do the Bechuanas sew up the eyelids of the bull which is to be used for this purpose? The answer appears to be given by the ceremonies which the same people observe when they are going out to war. On that occasion a woman rushes up to the army with her eyes shut and shakes a winnowing-fan, while she cries out, "The army is not seen! The army is not seen!" And a medicine-man at the same time sprinkles medicine over the spears, crying out in like manner, "The army is not seen! The army is not seen!" After that they seize a bull, sew up its eyelids with a hair of its tail, and drive it for some distance along the road which the army is to take. When it has preceded the army a little way, the bull is sacrificed, roasted whole, and eaten by the warriors. All the flesh must be consumed on the spot. Such parts as cannot be eaten are burnt with fire. Only the contents of the stomach are carefully preserved

The ox whose hide is used is blinded in order that the new town may be invisible to its enemies.

<sup>1</sup> T. Arhousset et F. Daumas, *Voyage d'Exploration au Nord-est de la Colonie du Cap de Bonne-Espérance* (Paris, 1842), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Virgil, *Aen.* i. 367 sq., with the commentary of Servius; Justin, xviii. 5. 9. Thongs cut from the hide of the ox sacrificed to the four-handed Apollo were given as prizes. See Hesychius, s.v. κινάστια; compare *id.*, πυρόλοποι. Whether the Greek custom was related to those discussed in the text seems doubtful. I have to thank Prof. R. C. Bosanquet for calling my attention to these passages of Hesychius.

<sup>3</sup> Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia Danica*, ix. pp. 462 sq. ed. P. E. Müller (where the hide employed is that of a horse); J. Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*, pp. 90 sq. Compare R. Köhler, "Sage von Landerwerbung

durch zerschnittene Häute," *Orient und Occident*, lii. 185-187.

<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajastan*, ii. (London, 1832) p. 235; W. Radloff, *Proben der Volksliteratur der Türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens*, iv. 179; A. Bastian, *Die Völker des Ostlichen Asien*, i. 25, iv. 367 sq.; T. Stamford Raffles, *History of Java* (London, 1817), ii. 153 sq.; Van Eek, "Schetsen van het eiland Bali," *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, Feb. 1880, p. 117. The substance of all these stories, except the first, was given by me in a note on "Hide-measured Lands," *Classical Review*, li. (1888) p. 322.

<sup>5</sup> J. Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*, pp. 538 sq.

as a charm which is to lead the warriors to victory. Chosen men carry the precious guts in front of the army, and it is deemed most important that no one should precede them. When they stop, the army stops, and it will not resume the march till it sees that the men with the bull's guts have gone forward.<sup>1</sup> The meaning of these ceremonies is explained by the cries of the woman and the priest, "The army is not seen! The army is not seen!" Clearly it is desirable that the army should not be perceived by the enemies until it is upon them. Accordingly on the principles of homoeopathic magic the Bechuanas apparently imagine that they can make themselves invisible by eating of the flesh of a blind bull, blindness and invisibility being to their simple minds the same thing. For the same reason the bowels of the blind ox are carried in front of the army to hide its advance from hostile eyes. In like manner the custom of sacrificing and eating a blind ox on the place where a new town is to be built may be intended to render the town invisible to enemies. At all events the Bawenda, a South African people who belong to the same Bantu stock as the Bechuanas, take great pains to conceal their kraals from passers-by. The kraals are built in the forest or bush, and the long winding footpaths which lead to them are often kept open only by the support of a single pole here and there. Indeed the paths are so low and narrow that it is very difficult to bring a horse into such a village. In time of war the poles are removed and the thorny creepers fall down, forming a natural screen or bulwark which the enemy can neither penetrate nor destroy by fire. The kraals are also surrounded by walls of undressed stones with a filling of soil; and to hide them still better from the view of the enemy the tops of the walls are sown with Indian corn or planted with tobacco. Hence travellers passing through the country seldom come across a Bawenda kraal. To see where the Bawenda dwell you must climb to the tops of mountains and look down on the roofs of their round huts peeping out of the surrounding green like clusters of mushrooms in the woods.<sup>2</sup> The object which the Bawenda attain by these perfectly rational means, the Bechuanas seek to compass by the sacrifice and consumption of a blind bull.

This explanation of the use of a blinded ox in sacrifice is confirmed by the reasons alleged by a Caffre for the observance of a somewhat similar custom in purificatory ceremonies after a battle. On these occasions the Bechuanas and other Caffre tribes of South Africa kill a black ox and cut out the tip of its tongue, an eye, a piece of the ham-string, and a piece of the principal sinew of the

This explanation of the use of a blinded ox is confirmed by a Caffre custom.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. W. C. Willoughby, "Notes on the Totemism of the Bechwana," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. E. Gottschling, "The Bawenda, a Sketch of their History and Customs," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxxv. (1905) pp. 368 sq.



shoulder. These parts are fried with certain herbs and rubbed into the joints of the warriors. By cutting out the tongue of the ox they think to prevent the enemy from wagging his tongue against them ; by severing the sinews of the ox they hope to cause the enemy's sinews to fail him in the battle ; and by removing the eye of the ox they imagine that they prevent the enemy from casting a covetous eye on their cattle.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> T. Arrousset et F. Daumas, *Relation d'un Voyage d'Exploration*, pp. 561-565.

## IV

### SOME CUSTOMS OF THE PELEW ISLANDERS

WE have seen that the state of society and religion among the Pelew Islanders in modern times presents several points of similarity to the condition of the peoples about the Eastern Mediterranean in antiquity.<sup>1</sup> Here I propose briefly to call attention to certain other customs of the Pelew Islanders which may serve to illustrate some of the institutions discussed in this volume.

#### 1. *Priests dressed as Women*

In the Pelew Islands it often happens that a goddess chooses a man, not a woman, for her minister and inspired mouthpiece. When that is so, the favoured man is thenceforth regarded and treated as a woman. He wears female attire, he carries a piece of gold on his neck, he labours like a woman in the taro fields, and he plays his new part so well that he earns the hearty contempt of his fellows.<sup>2</sup> This pretended change of sex under the inspiration of a female spirit perhaps explains a custom widely spread among savages, in accordance with which some men dress as women and act as women through life. These unsexed creatures often, perhaps generally, profess the arts of sorcery and healing, they communicate with spirits, and are regarded sometimes with awe and sometimes with contempt, as beings of a higher or lower order than common folk. Often they are dedicated and trained to their vocation from childhood. Effeminate sorcerers or priests of this sort are found among the Sea Dyaks of Borneo,<sup>3</sup> the Bugis of South

<sup>1</sup> Above, pp. 386 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde*, i. 35.

<sup>3</sup> C. A. L. M. Schwaner, *Borneo*, (Amsterdam, 1853), i. 186; M. T. H. Perelaer, *Ethnographische Beschrijving der Dajakz* (Zalt-Bommel, 1870), pp. 32-35; Captain R. Mundy, *Narrative*

*of Events in Borneo and Celebes from the Journals of James Brooke, Esq., Rajah of Sarawak*, ii. 65 *sq.*; Charles Brooke, *Ten Years in Sarawak* (London, 1866), ii. 280; H. Low, *Sarawak* (London, 1848), pp. 174-177; The Bishop of Labuan, "On the Wild Tribes of the North-West Coast of Borneo," *Transactions of the Ethno-*

In the Pelew Islands a man who is inspired by a goddess wears female attire and is treated as a woman. This pretended change of sex under the inspiration of a female spirit may explain a widespread custom whereby men dress and live like women.



Celebes,<sup>1</sup> the Patagonians of South America,<sup>2</sup> and the Aleutians and many Indian tribes of North America.<sup>3</sup> In the island of Rambree, off the coast of Arracan, a set of vagabond "conjurers," who dressed and lived as women, used to dance round a tall pole, invoking the aid of their favourite idol on the occasion of any calamity.<sup>4</sup> Male members of the Vallabha sect in India often seek to win the favour of the god Krishna, whom they specially revere, by wearing their hair long and assimilating themselves to women; even their spiritual chiefs, the so-called Maharajas, sometimes simulate the appearance of women when they lead the worship of their followers.<sup>5</sup> In Madagascar we hear of effeminate men who wore female attire and acted as women, thinking thereby to do God service.<sup>6</sup> In the kingdom of Congo there was a sacrificial priest who commonly dressed as a woman and gloried in the title of the Grandmother. The post of Grandmother must have been much coveted, for the incumbent might not be put

logical Society of London, N.S. ii. (1863) pp. 31 sq.; Spenser St John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*<sup>2</sup> (London, 1863), i. 73. In Sarawak these men are called *manangs*, in Dutch Borneo they are called *bassirs* or *bassirs*.

<sup>1</sup> Captain R. Mundy, *op. cit.* i. 82 sq.; B. F. Matthes, *Über die Bissos of heidnische Priester in Priesteressen der Boeginesen* (Amsterdam, 1872), pp. 1 sq.

<sup>2</sup> Th. Falkner, *Description of Patagonia* (Hereford, 1774), p. 117; J. Hutchinson, "The Tehuelche Indians of Patagonia," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, N.S. vii. (1869) p. 323. Among the Guaycurus of Southern Brazil there is a class of men who dress as women and do only women's work, such as spinning, weaving, and making pottery. But so far as I know, they are not said to be sorcerers or priests. See C. F. Ph. v. Martius, *Zur Ethnographie Amerikas und Brasilien* (Leipzig, 1867), pp. 74 sq.

<sup>3</sup> G. H. von Langsdorff, *Reise um die Welt* (Frankfort, 1812), ii. 43; H. J. Holmberg, "Ueber die Völker des Russischen Amerika," *Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicar*, iv. (Helsingfors, 1856), pp. 400 sq.; W. H. Dall, *Alaska* (London, 1870), pp. 402 sq.; Ross Cox, *The Columbia River*, i. 327 sq.; Father G. Boscana, "Chinlgechinich," in [A. Robinson's] *Life in California* (New York, 1846),

pp. 283 sq.; S. Powers, *Tribes of California* (Washington, 1877), pp. 132 sq.; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, i. 82, 92, 415, 585, 774; Hontan, *Mémoires de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (Amsterdam, 1705), p. 144; Lafitau, *Mœurs des Sauvages Amérigains* (Paris, 1724), i. 52-54; Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, vi. 4 sq.; W. H. Keating, *Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River* (London, 1825), i. 227 sq., 436; George Catlin, *North American Indians*,<sup>4</sup> ii. 214 sq.; Maximilian Prinz zu Wied, *Reise in das innere Nord-America* (Coblenz, 1839-1841), ii. 132 sq.; D. G. Brinton, *The Lenape and their Legends* (Philadelphia, 1885), pp. 109 sq.; J. G. Müller, *Geschichte der amerikanischen Urreligionen*<sup>2</sup> (Bale, 167), pp. 44 sq., 418. Among the tribes which permitted the custom were the Illinois, Mandans, Dacotas (Sioux), Sauks, and Foxes, to the east of the Rocky Mountains, the Yukis, Pomoos, and Pitt River Indians of California, and the Konlaks of Alaska.

<sup>4</sup> Lieut. Foley, in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, iv. 199.

<sup>5</sup> Monier Williams, *Religious Life and Thought in India*, p. 136. Compare J. A. Dubois, *Mœurs, Institutions, et Cérémonies des Peuples de l'Inde*, i. 439.

<sup>6</sup> Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique*, (Amsterdam, 1686), p. 467.

to death, whatever crimes or rascalities he committed; and to do him justice he appears commonly to have taken full advantage of this benefit of clergy. When he died, his fortunate successor dissected the body of the deceased Grandmother, extracting his heart and other vital organs, and amputating his fingers and toes, which he kept as priceless relics, and sold as sovereign remedies for all the ills that flesh is heir to.<sup>1</sup>

We may conjecture that in many of these cases the call to this strange form of the religious life came in the shape of a dream or vision, in which the dreamer or visionary imagined himself to be a woman or to be possessed by a female spirit; for with many savage races the disordered fancies of sleep or ecstasy are accepted as oracular admonitions which it would be perilous to disregard. At all events we are told that a dream or a revelation of some sort was the reason which in North America these men-women commonly alleged for the life they led; it had been thus brought home to them, they said, that their medicine or their salvation lay in living as women, and when once they had got this notion into their head nothing could drive it out again. Many an Indian father attempted by persuasion, by bribes, by violence, to deter his son from obeying the mysterious call, but all to no purpose.<sup>2</sup> Among the Sauks, an Indian tribe of North America, these effeminate beings were always despised, but sometimes they were pitied "as labouring under an unfortunate destiny which they cannot avoid, being supposed to be impelled to this course by a vision from the female spirit that resides in the moon."<sup>3</sup> And just as a man inspired by a goddess may adopt female attire, so conversely a woman inspired by a god may adopt male costume. In Uganda the great god Mukasa, the deity of the Victoria Nyanza Lake and of abundance,

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Labat, *Relation historique de l'Ethiopie Occidentale* (Paris, 1732), li. 195-199. Wherever men regularly dress as women, we may suspect that a superstitious motive underlies the custom even though our authorities do not mention it. The custom is thus reported among the Italmenes of Kamtschatka (G. W. Steller, *Beschreibung von dem Lande Kamtschatka*, pp. 350 sq.), the Lhoonsis of South-eastern India (Capt. T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India*, p. 255), and the Nogay or Mongutay of the Caucasus (J. Reinegg, *Beschreibung des Kaukasus*, i. 270). Among the Lhoonsis or Lushais not only do men sometimes dress like women and consort and work with them (T. H. Lewin, *l.c.*), but, on the other hand, women

sometimes dress and live like men, adopting masculine habits in all respects. When one of these unsexed women was asked her reasons for adopting a masculine mode of life, she at first denied that she was a woman, but finally confessed "that her *khuvang* was not good, and so she became a man." See the extract from the *Pioneer Mail* of May 1890, quoted in *The Indian Antiquary*, xxxii. (1903) p. 413. This permanent transformation of women into men seems to be much rarer than the converse change of men into women.

<sup>2</sup> Maximilian Prinz zu Wied, *Reise in das innere Nord-America*, ii. 133.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Keating, *Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River*, i. 227 sq.

Such transformations seem to have been often carried out in obedience to intimations received in dreams or in ecstasy.



imparted his oracles through a woman, who in ordinary life dressed like the rest of her sex in a bark-cloth wrapped round the body and fastened with a girdle, so as to leave the arms and shoulders bare; but when she prophesied under the inspiration of the god, she wore two bark-cloths knotted in masculine style over her shoulders and crossing each other on her breast and back.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps this assumed change of sex under the inspiration of a goddess may give the key to the legends of the effeminate Sardanapalus and the effeminate Hercules,<sup>2</sup> as well as to the practice of the effeminate priests of Cybele and the Syrian goddess. In all such cases the pretended transformation of a man into a woman would be intelligible if we supposed that the womanish priest or king thought himself animated by a female spirit, whose sex, accordingly, he felt bound to imitate. Certainly the eunuch priests of Cybele seem to have bereft themselves of their manhood under the supposed inspiration of the Great Goddess.<sup>3</sup> The priest of Hercules at Antimachia, in Cos, who dressed as a woman when he offered sacrifice, is said to have done so in imitation of Hercules who disguised himself as a woman to escape the pursuit of his enemies.<sup>4</sup> So the Lydian Hercules wore female attire when he served for three years as the purchased slave of the imperious Omphale, Queen of Lydia.<sup>5</sup> If we suppose that Queen Omphale, like Queen Semiramis, was nothing but the great Asiatic goddess,<sup>6</sup> or one of her Avatars, it becomes probable that the story of the womanish Hercules of Lydia preserves a reminiscence of a line or college of effeminate priests who, like the eunuch priests of the Syrian goddess, dressed as women in imitation of their goddess and were supposed to be inspired by her. The probability is increased by the practice of the priests of Hercules at Antimachia, in Cos, who, as we have just seen, actually wore female attire when they were engaged in their sacred

The theory of inspiration by a female spirit perhaps explains the legends of the effeminate Sardanapalus and the effeminate Hercules, both of whom may have been thought to be possessed by the great Asiatic goddess Astarte or her equivalent.

<sup>1</sup> For this information I have to thank my friend the Rev. J. Roscoe. He tells me that according to tradition Mukasa used to give his oracles by the mouth of a man, not of a woman. To wear two bark-cloths, one on each shoulder, is a privilege of royalty and of priests. The ordinary man wears a single bark-cloth knotted on one shoulder only. With the single exception mentioned in the text, women in Uganda never wear bark-cloths fastened over the shoulders.

<sup>2</sup> *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 167 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Catullus, lxiii. This is in substance the explanation of the custom given by Dr. L. R. Farnell, who observes that "the mad worshipper endeavoured thus against nature to

assimilate himself more closely to his goddess" (*Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, vii. (1904) p. 93). The theory is not necessarily inconsistent with my conjecture as to the magical use made of the severed parts. See above, pp. 223 sq.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Questiones Graecae*, 58.

<sup>5</sup> Apollodorus, ii. 6. 2 sq.; Athenaeus, xii. 11, pp. 515 F-516 B; Apollodorus, ii. 6. 3; Diogenes Siculus, iv. 31; Joannes Lydus, *De magistratibus*, iii. 64; Lucian, *Dialogi deorum*, xiii. 2; Ovid, *Heroides*, ix. 55 sqq.; Statius, *Theb.* x. 646-649.

<sup>6</sup> On Semiramis in this character see above, pp. 143 sq.; *The Golden Bough*,<sup>2</sup> iii. 161 sqq.

duties. Similarly at the vernal mysteries of Hercules in Rome the men were draped in the garments of women;<sup>1</sup> and in some of the rites and processions of Dionysus also men wore female attire.<sup>2</sup> In legend and art there are clear traces of an effeminate Dionysus, who perhaps figured in a strange ceremony for the artificial fertilisation of the fig.<sup>3</sup> Among the Nahanarvals, an ancient German tribe, a priest garbed as a woman presided over a sacred grove.<sup>4</sup> These and similar practices<sup>5</sup> need not necessarily have any connection with the social system of mother-kin. Wherever a goddess is revered and the theory of inspiration is held, a man may be thought to be possessed by a female spirit, whether society be organised on mother-kin or on father-kin. Still the chances of such a transformation of sex will be greater under mother-kin than under father-kin if, as we have found reason to believe, a system of mother-kin is more favourable to the development and multiplication of goddesses than of gods. It is therefore, perhaps, no mere accident that we meet with these effeminate priests in regions like the Pelew Islands and Western

<sup>1</sup> Joannes Lylius, *De mensuris*, iv. 46, p. 81, ed. L. Bekker. Yet at Rome, by an apparent contradiction, women might not be present at a sacrifice offered to Hercules (Propertius, v. 9. 67-70; see further above, p. 86, note 5), and at Gades women might not enter the temple of Melcarth, the Tyrian Hercules (Silius Italicus, lili. 22). There was a Greek proverb, "A woman does not go to a temple of Hercules" (Macarius, *Cent.* lili. 11; *Paroemiographi Graeci*, ed. Deutsch et Schneidewin, i. 392, li. 154). Roman women did not swear by Hercules (Aulus Gellius, xi. 6).

<sup>2</sup> Lucian, *Calumnias non temere credendum*, 16; Hesychius and Suidas, s.v. ἰσθητάαα. At the Athenian vintage festival of the Oschophoria a chorus of singers was led in procession by two young men dressed exactly like girls; they carried branches of vines laden with ripe clusters. The procession was said to be in honour of Dionysus and Athena or Ariadne. See Proclus, quoted by Photius, *Bibliotheca*, p. 322a, ed. L. Bekker; Plutarch, *Theseus*, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* li. 34, pp. 29 sq., ed. Potter; Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes*, v. 28; *Mythographi Graeci*, ed. A. Westermann, p. 368; J. Tzetzes, *Scholion on Lycophron*, 212. As to the special association of the fig

with Dionysus, see Athenaeus, lili. 14, p. 78. As to the artificial fertilisation of the fig, see my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 270 sq. On the type of the effeminate Dionysus in art see E. Thraemer, in W. H. Roscher's *Lexikon d. griech. u. rom. Mythologie*, i. 1135 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 43. Perhaps, as Mr. Chadwick thinks, this priest may have succeeded to a priestess when the change from mother-kin to father-kin took place. See H. M. Chadwick, *The Origin of the English Nation* (Cambridge, 1907), p. 339.

<sup>5</sup> In Cyprus there was a bearded and masculine image of Venus (probably Astarte) in female attire: according to Philochorus, the deity thus represented was the moon, and sacrifices were offered to him or her by men clad as women, and by women clad as men. See Macrobius, *Saturn.* lili. 7. 2 sq.; Servius on Virgil, *Aen.* li. 632. A similar exchange of garments took place between Argive men and women at the festival of the Hybristica, which fell in the month of Hermes, either at the new moon or on the fourth of the month. See Plutarch, *De mulierum virtutibus*, 4; Polyaeus, viii. 33. On the thirteenth of January flute-players paraded the streets of Rome in the garb of women (Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae*, 35).



Asia, where the system of mother-kin either actually prevails or has at least left traces of it behind in tradition and custom. Such traces, for example, are to be found in Lydia and Cos,<sup>1</sup> in both of which the effeminate Hercules had his home.

But the religious or superstitious interchange of dress between men and women is an obscure and complex problem, and it is unlikely that any single solution would apply to all the cases. Probably the custom has been practised from many different motives. For example, the practice of dressing boys as girls has certainly been sometimes adopted to avert the Evil Eye;<sup>2</sup> and it is possible that the custom of changing garments at marriage, the bridegroom disguising himself as a woman, or the bride disguising herself as a man, may have been resorted to for the same purpose. Thus in Cos, where the priest of Hercules wore female attire, the bridegroom was in like manner dressed as a woman when he received his bride.<sup>3</sup> Spartan brides had their hair shaved, and were clad in men's clothes and booted on their wedding night.<sup>4</sup> Argive brides wore false beards when they slept with their husbands for the first time.<sup>5</sup> In Southern Celebes a bridegroom at a certain point of the long and elaborate marriage ceremonies puts on the garments which his bride has just put off.<sup>6</sup> Among the Masai of East Africa the men dress as girls for a month after marriage.<sup>7</sup> Among the

But the exchange of costume between men and women has probably been practised also from other motives, for example, from a wish to avert the Evil Eye.

<sup>1</sup> For traces of mother-kin in Lydia see my *Lectures on the Early History of the Kingship*, pp. 242 sq. With regard to Cos we know from inscriptions that at Halasarna all who shared in the sacred rites of Apollo and Hercules had to register the names of their father, their mother, and of their mother's father; from which it appears that maternal descent was counted more important than paternal descent. See Collitz and Bechtel *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inchriften*, iii. 1. pp. 382-393, Nos. 3705, 3706; Dittenberger, *Syllage Inscriptionum Græcarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 614; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 1003; J. Toepffer, *Attische Genealogie*, p. 192 sq. On traces of mother-kin in the legend and ritual of Hercules see A. B. Cook, "Who was the Wife of Hercules?" *Classical Review*, xx. (1906) pp. 376 sq. Mr. Cook conjectures that a Sacred Marriage of Hercules and Hera was celebrated in Cos. We know in fact from a Coan inscription that a bed was made and a marriage celebrated beside the image of Hercules, and it seems probable that the rite was that of a Sacred Marriage,

though some scholars interpret it merely of an ordinary human wedding. See Dittenberger, *Syllage Inscriptionum Græcarum*,<sup>2</sup> No. 734; Dareste, Hauswaller, Reinach, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Juridiques Grecques*, Deuxième Série, xxiv. B. pp. 94 sqq.; Fr. Back, *De Græcorum caerimonibus in quibus homines decorum vice fungebantur* (Berlin, 1883), pp. 14-24.

<sup>2</sup> *Punjab Notes and Queries*, i. (1884) §§ 219, 869, 1007, 1029; *id.*, ii. (1885) §§ 344, 561, 570; *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, i. (1886) p. 123; *North Indian Notes and Queries*, iii. (1893) § 99. Compare my notes in *The Classical Review*, vii. (1893) pp. 292 sq.; and on Pausanias, i. 22. 6 (vol. ii. p. 266).

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Quæstiones Græcæ*, 58.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *De mulierum virtutibus*, 4.

<sup>6</sup> B. F. Matthes, *Bijdragen tot de Ethnologie van Zuid-Celebes* (the Hague, 1875), p. 35. The marriage ceremonies here described are especially those of princes.

<sup>7</sup> J. Thomson, *Through Masai Land*, p. 442.

Jews of Egypt in the Middle Ages the bride led the wedding dance with a helmet on her head and a sword in her hand, while the bridegroom adorned himself as a woman and put on female attire.<sup>1</sup> At a Brahman marriage in Southern India "the bride is dressed up as a boy, and another girl is dressed up to represent the bride. They are taken in procession through the street, and, on returning, the pseudo-bridegroom is made to speak to the real bridegroom in somewhat insolent tones, and some mock play is indulged in. The real bridegroom is addressed as if he was the syce (groom) or gumasta (clerk) of the pseudo-bridegroom, and is sometimes treated as a thief, and judgment passed on him by the latter."<sup>2</sup> If the intention of such interchange of costume was to protect the wearer against the Evil Eye by disguising him or her past recognition, we might compare the practice of the Lycian men, who regularly wore women's dress in mourning;<sup>3</sup> for this might be intended to conceal them from the ghost, just as perhaps for a similar reason some peoples of antiquity used to descend into pits and remain there for several days, shunning the light of the sun, whenever a death had taken place in the family.<sup>4</sup> However, when at marriage the bride alone assumes the costume and appearance of the other sex, the motive for the disguise may rather be a notion that on the principle of homoeopathic magic she thereby ensures the birth of a male heir.<sup>5</sup> Similarly in Sweden there is a popular superstition that "on the night preceding her nuptials the bride should have a baby-boy to sleep with her, in which case her first-born will be a son";<sup>6</sup> and among the Kabyles, when a bride dis-

<sup>1</sup> Sepp, *Altöayerischer Sagenschatz* (Munich, 1876), p. 232, referring to Maimonides.

<sup>2</sup> E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* (Madras, 1906), p. 3. The pseudo-bridegroom is apparently the bride in masculine attire.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, 22; Valerius Maximus, ii. 6. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *l.c.*

<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere I have conjectured that the wearing of female attire by the bridegroom at marriage may mark a transition from mother-kin to father-kin, the intention of the custom being to transfer to the father those rights over the children which had previously been enjoyed by the mother alone (*Totemism*, pp. 78 *sq.*). But I am now disposed to think that the other explanation suggested in the text is the more probable. Sometimes the interchange of male and female costume at marriage takes place between persons who

are not the bride and bridegroom. For examples see Capt. J. S. King "Social Customs of the Western Somali Tribes," *The Folk-lore Journal*, vi. (1888) p. 122; J. P. Farler, "The Usambara Country in East Africa," *Proceedings of the R. Geographical Society*, N.S. i. (1879) p. 92; Major J. Biddulph, *Tribes of the Hindoo Koosh*, pp. 78, 80; G. A. Grierson, *Bihar Peasant Life*, p. 365; W. Crooke, *Popular Religion and Folk-lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), ii. 8; A. de Gubernatis, *Usi nuziali in Italia*,<sup>3</sup> p. 190; P. Sébillot, *Costumes Populaires de la Haute Bretagne*, p. 138; F. S. Krauss, *Sitte und Brauch der Süd-Slaven*, p. 438. Mr. Crooke has suggested (*l.c.*) that such disguises, as well as the custom of "the false bride," are intended to divert the Evil Eye from the bride and bridegroom.

<sup>6</sup> L. Lloyd, *Peasant Life in Sweden* (London, 1870), p. 85.



mounts from her mule at her husband's house, a young lad leaps into the saddle before she touches the ground, in order that her first child may be a boy.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Prostitution of Unmarried Girls

Like many peoples of Western Asia in antiquity, the Pelew Islanders systematically prostitute their unmarried girls for hire. Hence, just as in Lydia and Cyprus of old, the damsels are a source of income to their family, and women wait impatiently for the time when their young daughters will be able to help the household by their earnings. Indeed the mother regularly anticipates the time by depriving the girl of her virginity with her own hands.<sup>2</sup> Hence the theory that the prostitution of unmarried girls is a device to destroy their virginity without risk to their husbands is just as inapplicable to the Pelew Islanders as we have seen it to be to the peoples of Western Asia in antiquity. When a Pelew girl has thus been prepared for her vocation by her mother, she sells her favours to all the men of her village who can pay for them and who do not belong to her own exogamous clan; but she never grants her favours to the same man twice. Accordingly in every village of the Pelew Islands it may be taken as certain that the men and women know each other carnally, except that members of the same clan are debarred from each other by the rule of exogamy.<sup>3</sup> Thus a well-marked form of sexual communism, limited only by the exogamous prohibitions which attach to the clans, prevails among these people. Nor is this communism restricted to the inhabitants of the same village, for the girls of each village are regularly sent away to serve as prostitutes (*armengols*) in another village. There they live with the men of one of the many clubs or associations (*kaldebeckels*) in the clubhouse (*blay*), attending to the house, consorting freely with the men, and receiving pay for their services. A girl leading this life in the clubhouse of another village is well treated by the men: a wrong done to her is a wrong done to the whole club; and in her own village her value is increased, not diminished, by the time she thus spends as a prostitute in a neighbouring community. After her period of service is over she may marry either in the village where she has served or in her own. Sometimes many or all of the young women of a village go together to act as prostitutes (*armengols*) in a neighbouring village, and for this they are well paid by the community which receives them. The money so earned is divided among the chiefs of the village to which the damsels belong. Such a joint expedition

The systematic prostitution of unmarried girls for hire in the Pelew Islands seems to be a form of sexual communism and of group-marriage.

<sup>1</sup> J. Liorel, *Kabylie du Jurdjurs* (*Legenden der Pelauer*), pp. 50 sq. (Paris, N.D.), p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> J. Kubary, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrich-*

of the unmarried girls of a village is called a *btolobol*. But the young women never act as *armengols* in any clubhouse of their own village.<sup>1</sup>

The custom supports by analogy the derivation of the similar Asiatic custom from a similar state of society.

Thus, while the Pelew custom of prostituting the unmarried girls to all the men of their own village, but not of their own clan, is a form of sexual communism practised within a local group, the custom of prostituting them to men of other villages is a form of sexual communism practised between members of different local groups; it is a kind of group-marriage. These customs of the Pelew Islanders therefore support by analogy the hypothesis that among the ancient peoples of Western Asia also the systematic prostitution of unmarried women may have been derived from an earlier period of sexual communism.<sup>2</sup>

### § 3. Custom of slaying Chiefs

In the Pelew Islands the heir to the chieftainship of a clan has a formal right to slay his predecessor.

In the Pelew Islands when the chief of a clan has reigned too long or has made himself unpopular, the heir has a formal right to put him to death, though for reasons which will appear this right is only exercised in some of the principal clans. The practice of regicide, if that word may be extended to the assassination of chiefs, is in these islands a national institution regulated by exact rules, and every high chief must lay his account with it. Indeed so well recognised is the custom that when the heir-apparent, who under the system of mother-kin must be a brother, a nephew, or a cousin on the mother's side, proves himself precocious and energetic, the people say, "The cousin is a grown man. The chief's *tobolbel* is nigh at hand."<sup>3</sup>

The plot of death and its execution.

In such cases the plot of death is commonly so well hushed up that it seldom miscarries. The first care of the conspirators is to discover where the doomed man keeps his money. For this purpose an old woman will sleep for some nights in the house and make inquiries quietly, till like a sleuth-hound she has nosed the hoard. Then the conspirators come, and the candidate for the chieftainship despatches his predecessor either with his own hand or by the hand of a young cousin. Having done the deed he takes possession of the official residence, and applies to the widow of the deceased the form of persuasion technically known as *meleket*. This consists of putting a noose round her neck, and drawing it tighter and tighter till she consents to give up her late husband's money. After that the murderer and his friends have

<sup>1</sup> J. Kubary, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-53, 91-98.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 35 *sq.*

<sup>3</sup> J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrich-*

*tungen der Pelauer*, p. 43. The writer does not translate the word *tobolbel*, but the context sufficiently explains its meaning.



nothing further to do for the present, but to remain quietly in the house and allow events to take their usual course.

Meantime the chiefs assemble in the council-house, and the loud droning notes of the triton-shell, which answers the purpose of a tocsin, summon the whole population to arms. The warriors muster, and surrounding the house where the conspirators are ensconced they shower spears and stones at it, as if to inflict condign punishment on the assassins. But this is a mere blind, a sham, a legal fiction, intended perhaps to throw dust in the eyes of the ghost and make him think that his death is being avenged. In point of fact the warriors take good care to direct their missiles at the roof or walls of the house, for if they threw them at the windows they might perhaps hurt the murderer. After this formality has been satisfactorily performed, the regicide steps out of the house and engages in the genial task of paying the death duties to the various chiefs assembled. When he has observed this indispensable ceremony, the law is satisfied: all constitutional forms have been carried out: the assassin is now the legitimate successor of his victim and reigns in his stead without any further trouble.

Cere-  
monies  
observed  
before the  
assassin is  
recognised  
as chief in  
room of his  
victim.

But if he has omitted to massacre his predecessor and has allowed him to die a natural death, he suffers for his negligence by being compelled to observe a long series of complicated and irksome formalities before he can make good his succession in the eyes of the law. For in that case the title of chief has to be formally withdrawn from the dead man and conferred on his successor by a curious ceremony, which includes the presentation of a cocoa-nut and a taro plant to the new chief. Moreover, at first he may not enter the chief's house, but has to be shut up in a tiny hut for thirty or forty days during all the time of mourning, and even when that is over he may not come out till he has received and paid for a human head brought him by the people of a friendly state. After that he still may not go to the sea-shore until more formalities have been fully observed. These comprise a very costly fishing expedition, which is conducted by the inhabitants of another district and lasts for weeks. At the end of it a net full of fish is brought to the chief's house, and the people of the neighbouring communities are summoned by the blast of trumpets. As soon as the stranger fishermen have been publicly paid for their services, a relative of the new chief steps across the net and solemnly splits a cocoa-nut in two with an old-fashioned knife made of a *Tridacna* shell, while at the same time he bans all the evils that might befall his kinsman. Then, without looking at the nut, he throws the pieces on the ground, and if they fall so that the two halves lie with the opening upwards, it is an omen that the chief will live long. The pieces of the nut are then tied together and taken to the house of another chief, the friend of the new ruler, and there they are kept in token that the ceremony has

But the  
formalities  
which a  
chief has  
to observe  
at his  
accession  
are much  
more com-  
plicated  
and tedious  
if he has not  
murdered  
his prede-  
cessor.

been duly performed. Thereupon the fish are divided among the people, the strangers receiving half. This completes the legal ceremonies of accession, and the new chief may now go about freely. But these tedious formalities and others which I pass over are dispensed with when the new chief has proved his title by slaying his predecessor. In that case the procedure is much simplified, but on the other hand the death duties are so very heavy that only rich men can afford to indulge in the luxury of regicide. Hence in the Pelew Islands of to-day, or at least of yesterday, the old-fashioned mode of succession by slaughter is now restricted to a few families of the bluest blood and the longest purses.<sup>1</sup>

The Pelew custom shows how regicide may be regarded as an ordinary incident of constitutional government.

If this account of the existing or recent usage of the Pelew Islanders sheds little light on the motives for putting chiefs to death, it well illustrates the business-like precision with which such a custom may be carried out, and the public indifference, if not approval, with which it may be regarded as an ordinary incident of constitutional government. So far, therefore, the Pelew custom bears out the view that a systematic practice of regicide, however strange and revolting it may seem to us, is perfectly compatible with a state of society in which human conduct and human life are estimated by a standard very different from ours. If we would understand the early history of institutions, we must learn to detach ourselves from the prepossessions of our own time and country, and to place ourselves as far as possible at the standpoint of men in distant lands and distant ages.

<sup>1</sup> J. Kubary, *Die sozialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 43-45, 75-78.



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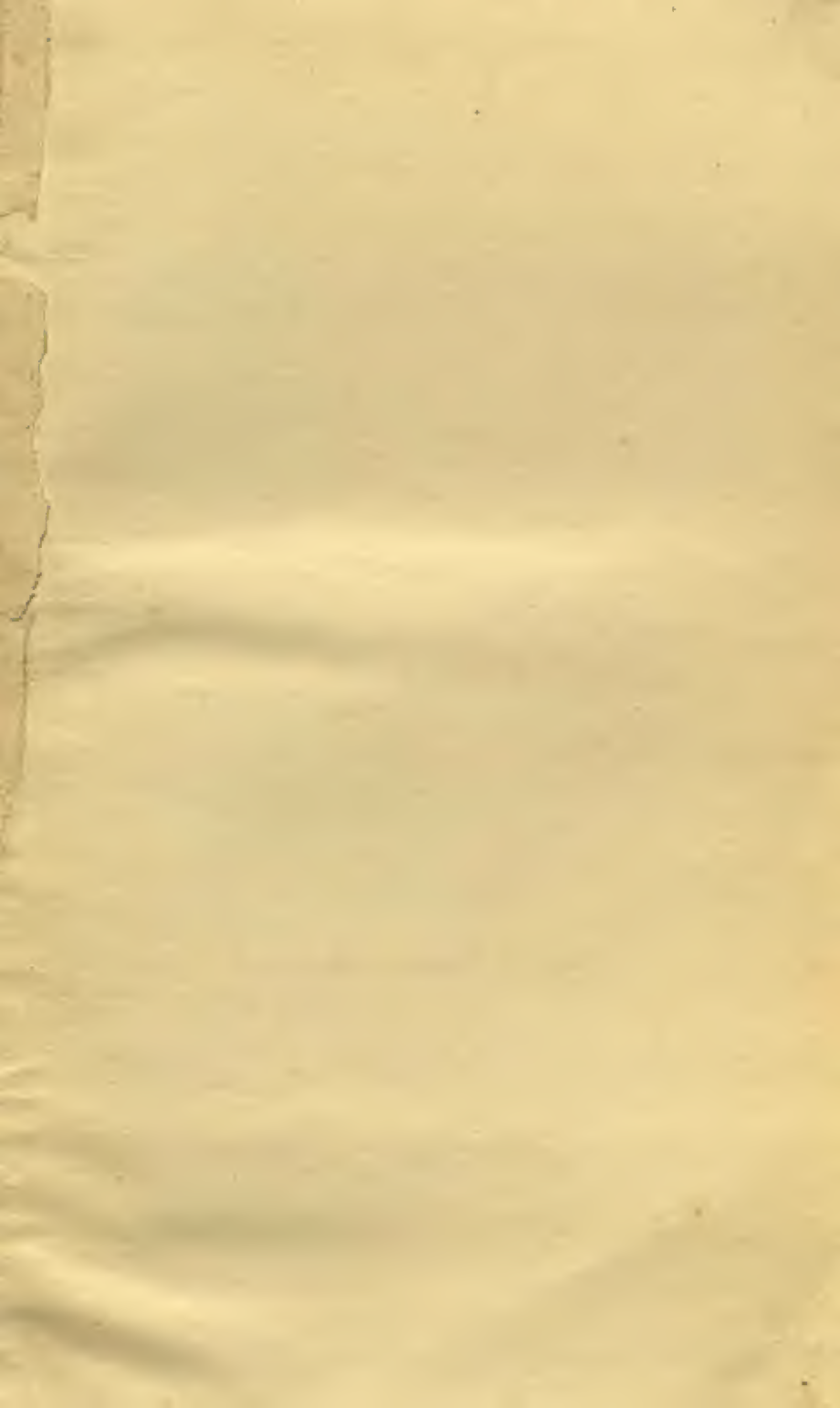


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